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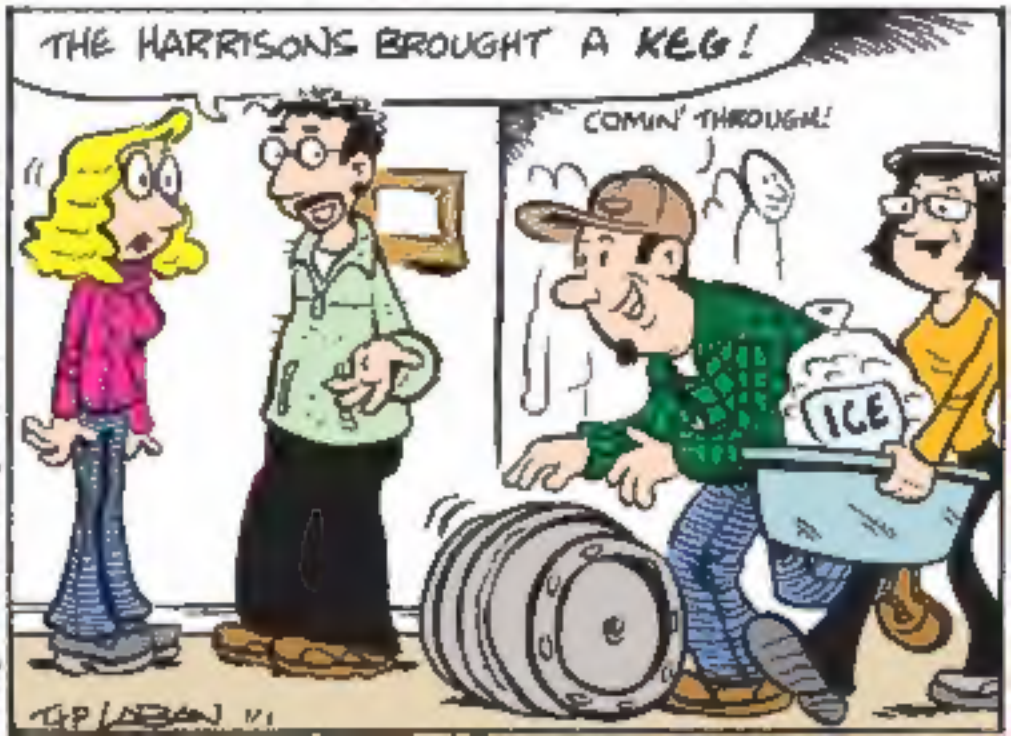

...3...2...1... HAPPY NEW YEAR!!
I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, LEN--THIS TURNED INTO A PRETTY FUN PARTY!
YEAH--EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE HAVING A GOOD TIME. BUT I WONDER WHAT'S WITH THAT LITTLE GROUP?
WE'RE THE DESIGNATED DRIVERS.

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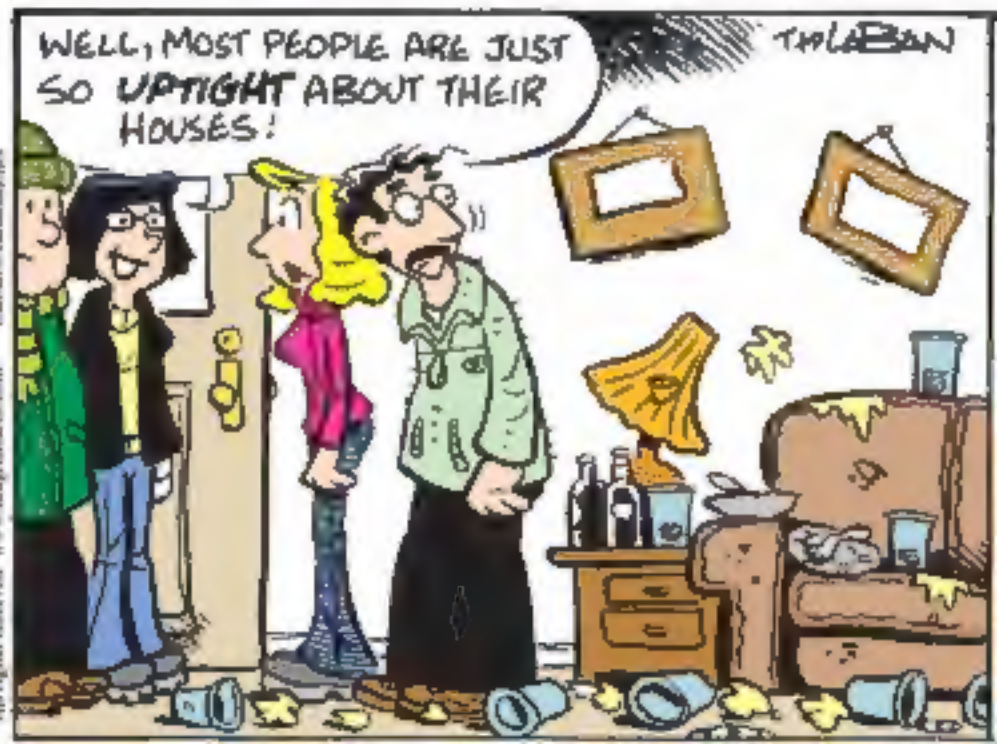

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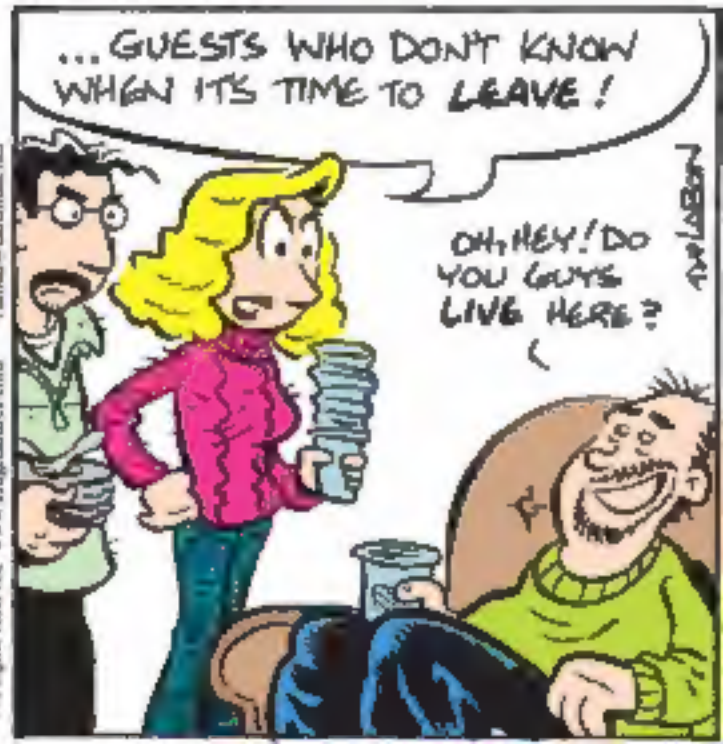

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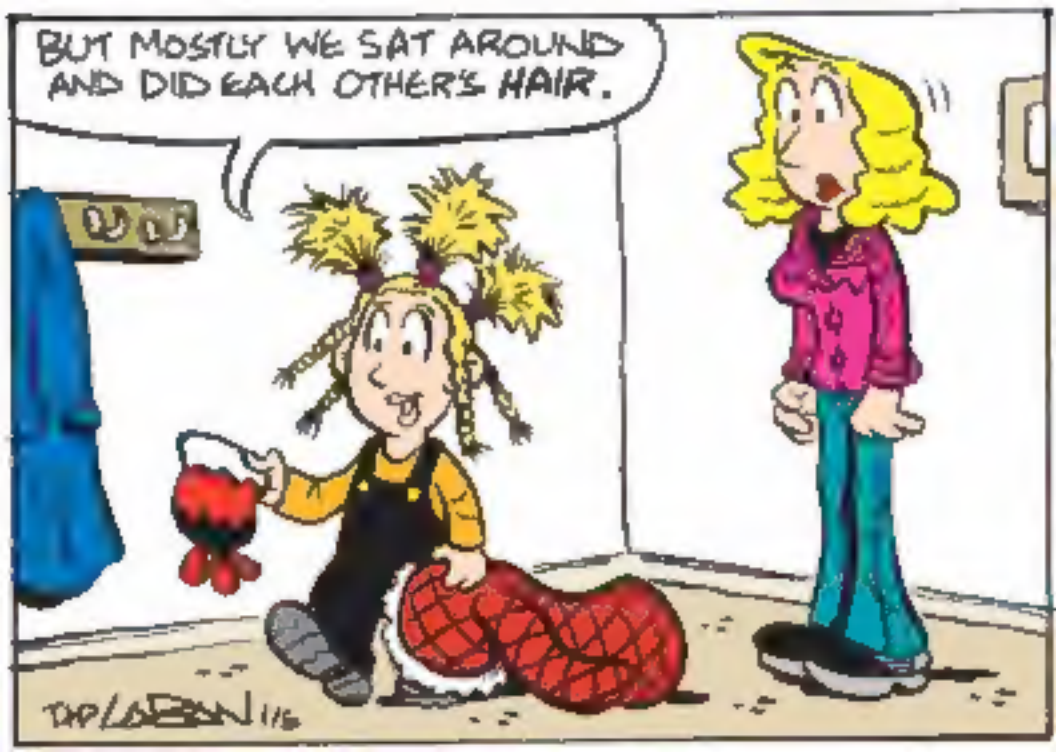

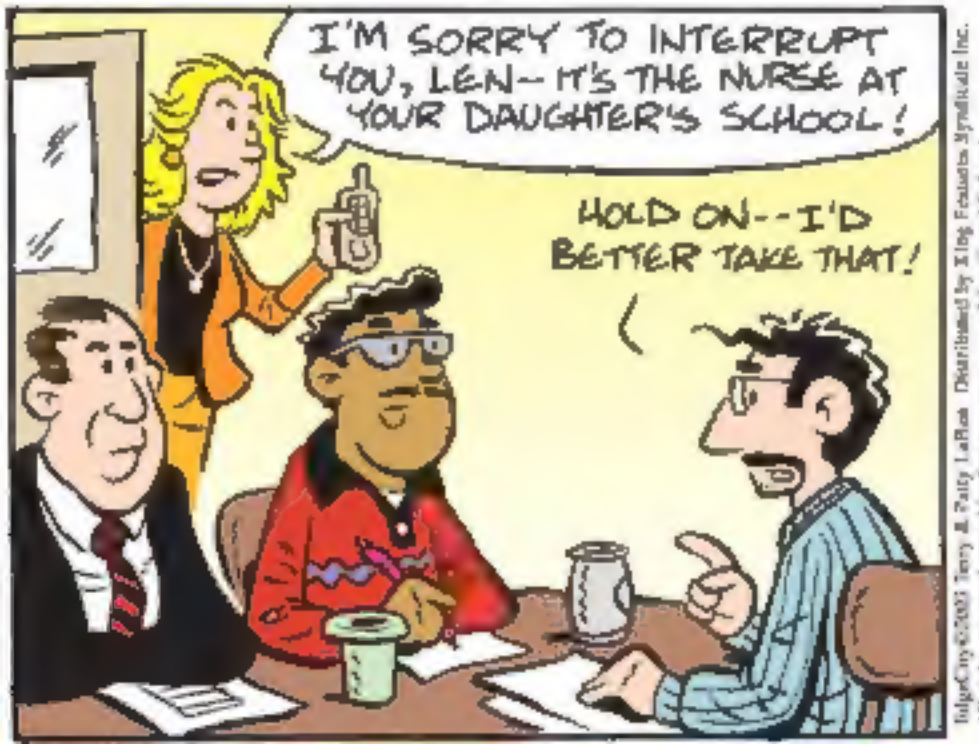

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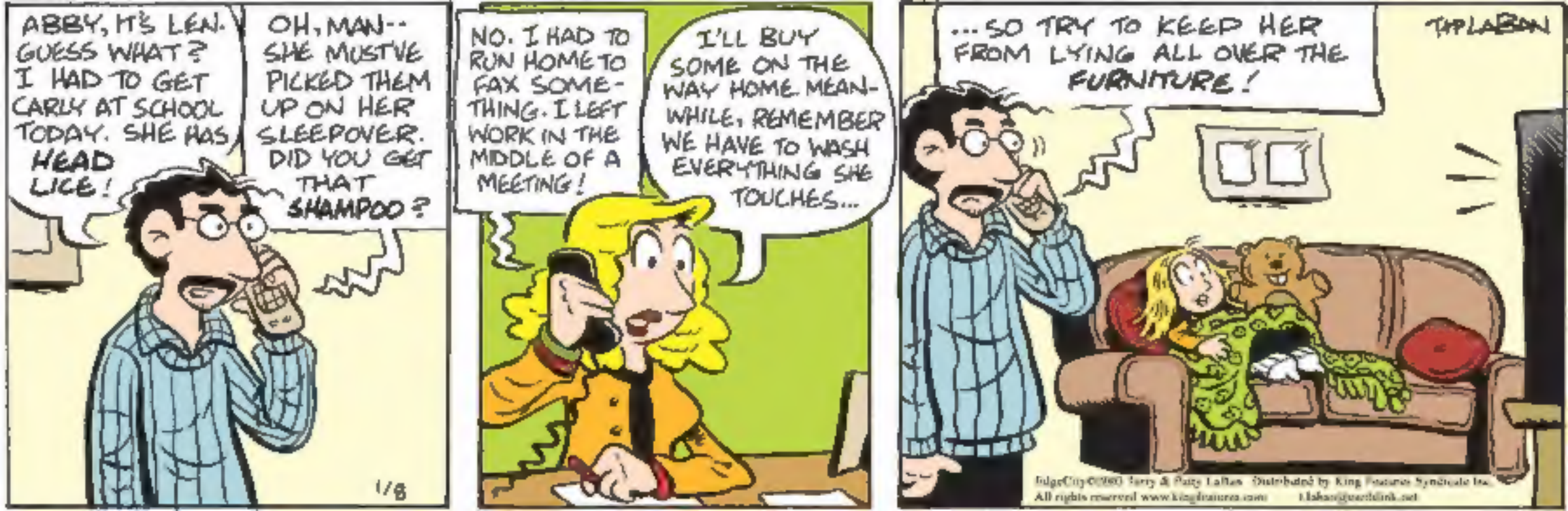
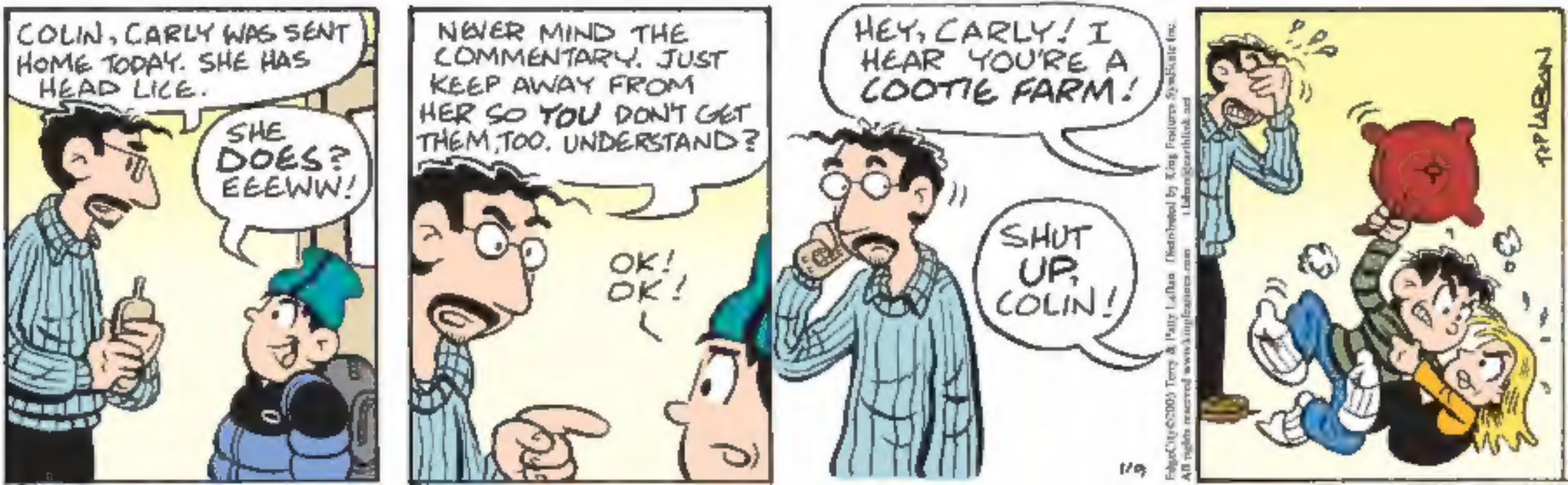

ABBY, IT'S LEN. GUESS WHAT? I HAD TO GET CARLY AT SCHOOL TODAY. SHE HAS HEAD LICE!
OH, MAN-- SHE MUST'VE PICKED THEM UP ON HER SLEEPOVER. DID YOU GET THAT SHAMPOO?
1/8
NO. I HAD TO RUN HOME TO FAX SOMETHING. I LEFT WORK IN THE MIDDLE OF A MEETING!
I'LL BUY SOME ON THE WAY HOME. MEANWHILE, REMEMBER WE HAVE TO WASH EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHES...
...SO TRY TO KEEP HER FROM LYING ALL OVER THE FURNITURE!
TAP LABAN


COLIN, CARLY WAS SENT HOME TODAY. SHE HAS HEAD LICE.
SHE DOES? EEEWW!
NEVER MIND THE COMMENTARY. JUST KEEP AWAY FROM HER SO YOU DON'T GET THEM, TOO. UNDERSTAND?
OK! OK!
HEY, CARLY! I HEAR YOU'RE A COOTIE FARM!
SHUT UP, COLIN!
1/9
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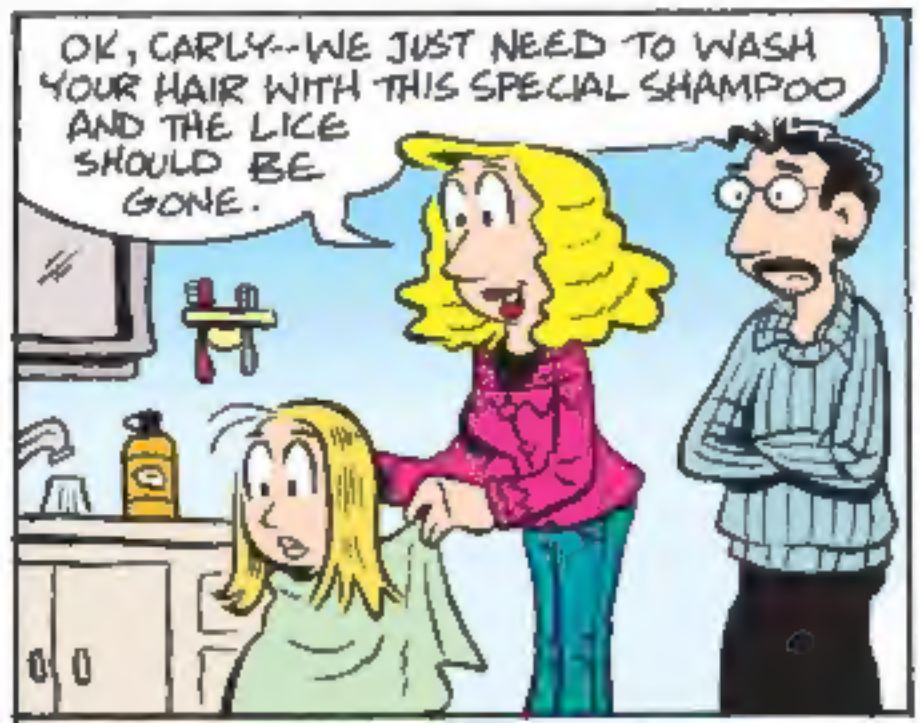

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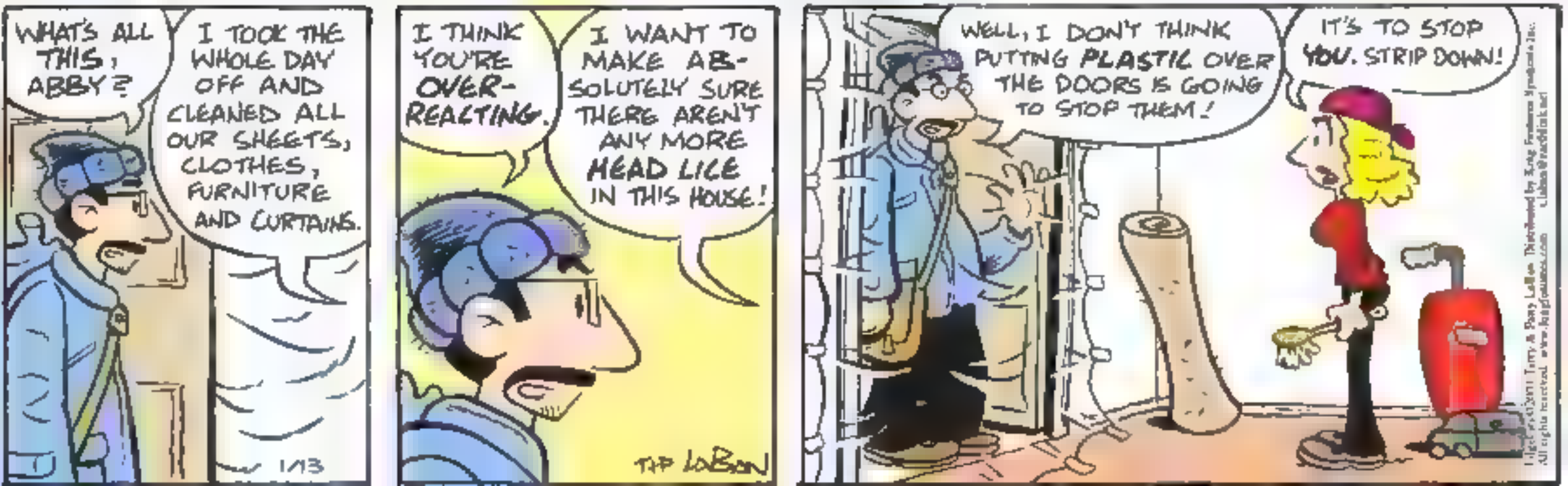
I DON'T SEE ANY MORE LICE OR NITS.
ALL IT TAKES TO GET RID OF 'EM IS A SHAMPOO, HUH? PRETTY SIMPLE.
ACTUALLY, THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING. WE'VE GOT TO CLEAN EVERYTHING IN THE HOUSE--CLOTHES, BEDDING, FURNITURE, CARPETS...
COME ON, ABBY! CLOTHES AND BEDDING I CAN SEE...
BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT A HASSLE IT'D BE TO CLEAN THE FURNITURE AND CARPETS?
YOU'RE RIGHT. HERE--HELP ME TAKE THIS OUT TO THE CURB!
1/11

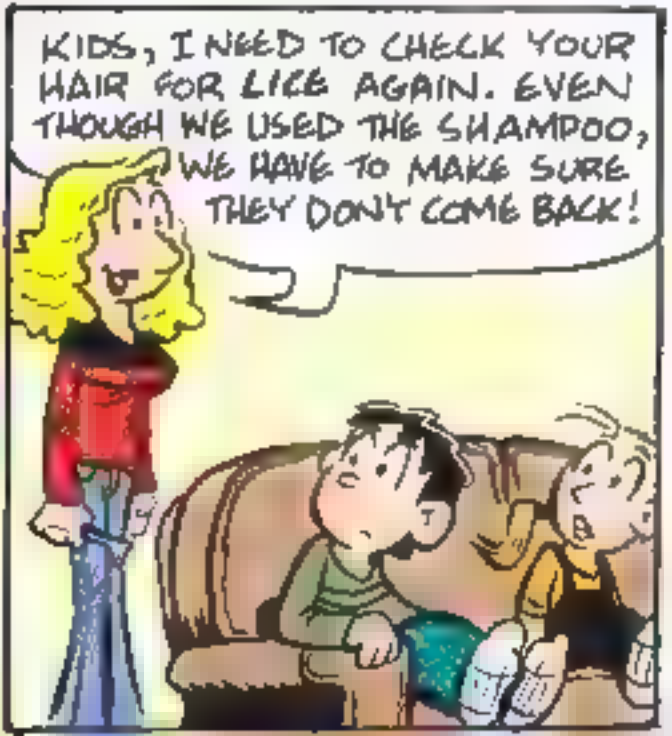

WHAT'S ALL THIS, ABBY?
I TOOK THE WHOLE DAY OFF AND CLEANED ALL OUR SHEETS, CLOTHES, FURNITURE AND CURTAINS.
1/13
I THINK YOU'RE OVER-REACTING.
I WANT TO MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THERE AREN'T ANY MORE HEAD LICE IN THIS HOUSE!
TAP LaBON
WELL, I DON'T THINK PUTTING PLASTIC OVER THE DOORS IS GOING TO STOP THEM!
IT'S TO STOP YOU. STRIP DOWN!

HELLO, AUDREY? IT'S ABBY. I'M SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT CARLY HAS HEAD LICE, SO YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK HOLLY.

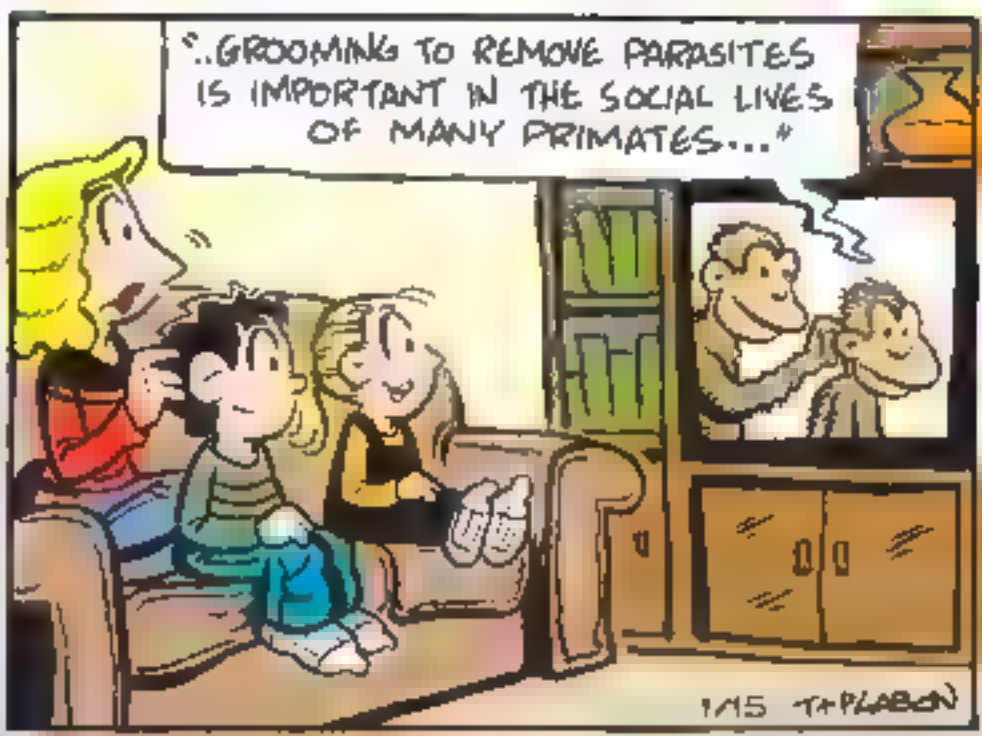
THANKS FOR BEING SO UNDERSTANDING. I'VE BEEN A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT CALLING!

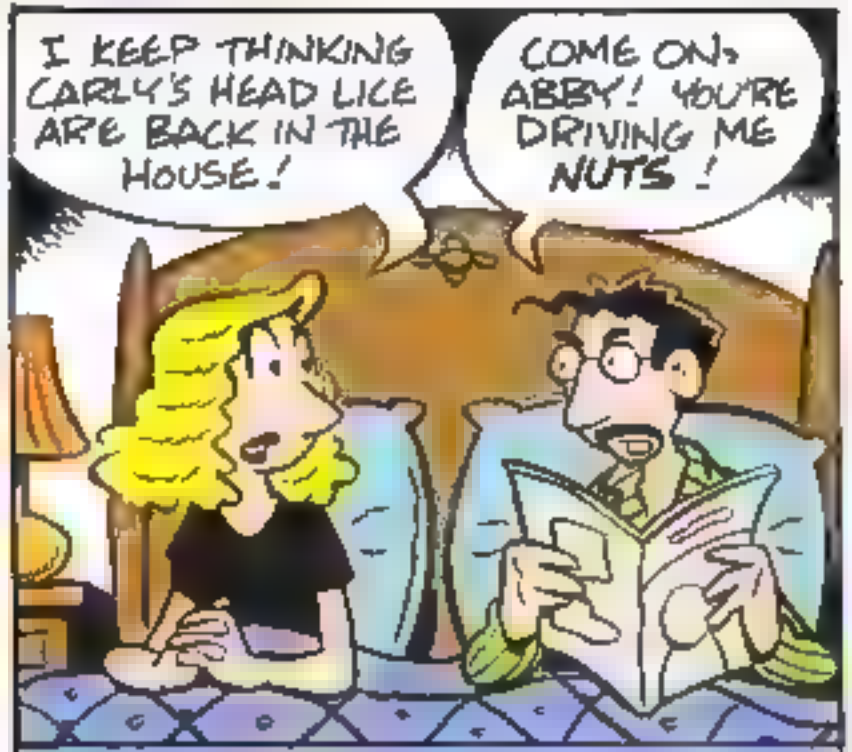
WELL, I KNOW THE GIRLS LOVE TO PLAY, SO LET'S GET THEM TOGETHER AGAIN REAL SOON!

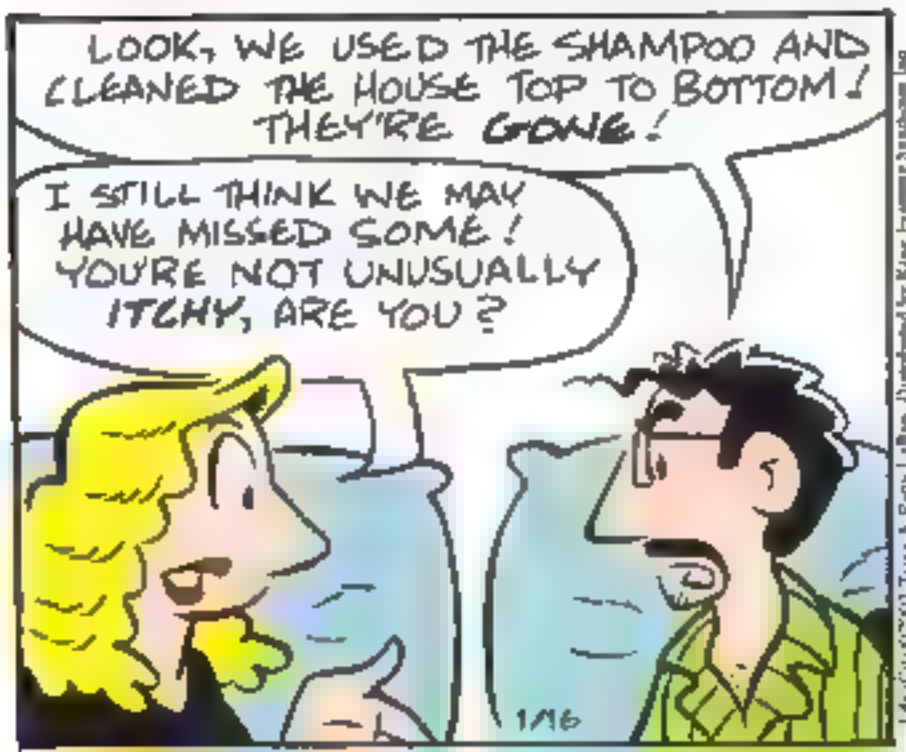
YEAH -- THE NEXT EIGHT MONTHS ARE BUSY FOR US, TOO...
TMP LaBan


KIDS, I NEED TO CHECK YOUR HAIR FOR LICE AGAIN. EVEN THOUGH WE USED THE SHAMPOO, WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEY DON'T COME BACK!

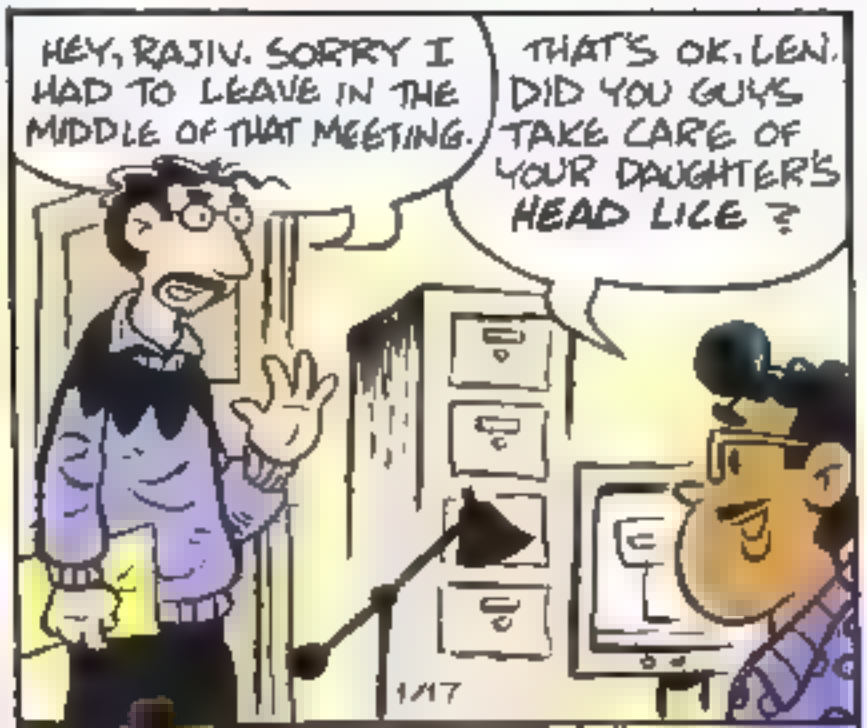
NOW? BUT WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A COOL SHOW ON "ANIMAL PLANET"!
THAT'S OK! I'LL DO IT WHILE YOU WATCH!


"..GROOMING TO REMOVE PARASITES IS IMPORTANT IN THE SOCIAL LIVES OF MANY PRIMATES..."
1/15 T+PLABON

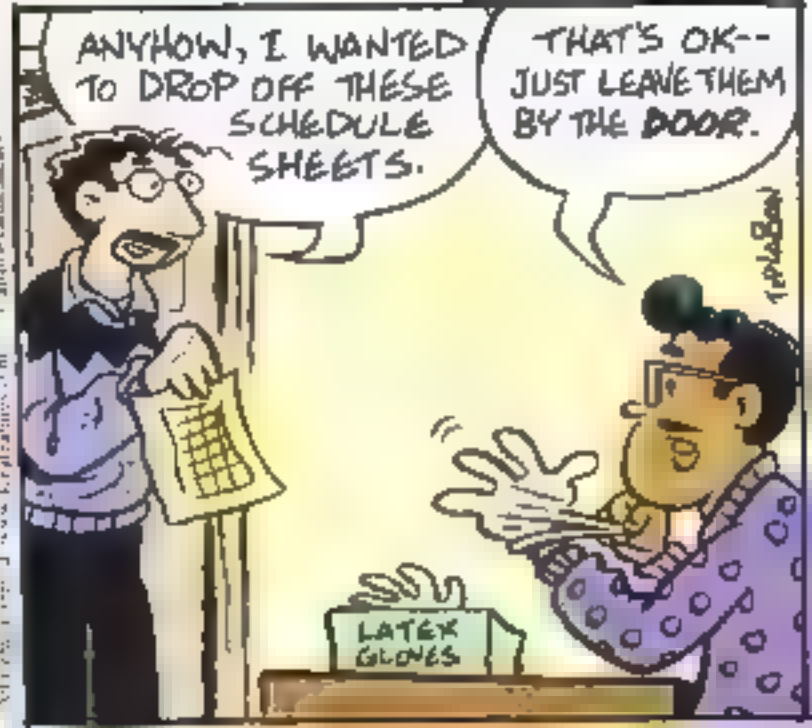

I KEEP THINKING CARLY'S HEAD LICE ARE BACK IN THE HOUSE!
COME ON, ABBY! YOU'RE DRIVING ME NUTS!

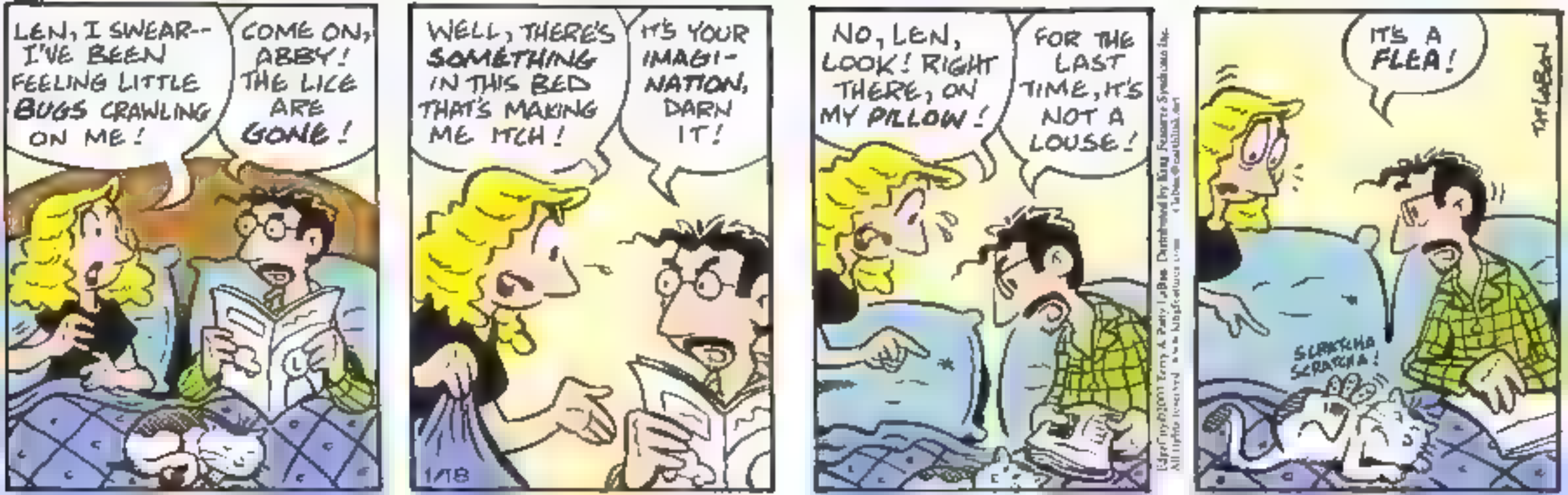

LOOK, WE USED THE SHAMPOO AND CLEANED THE HOUSE TOP TO BOTTOM! THEY'RE GONE!
I STILL THINK WE MAY HAVE MISSED SOME! YOU'RE NOT UNUSUALLY ITCHY, ARE YOU?
1/16

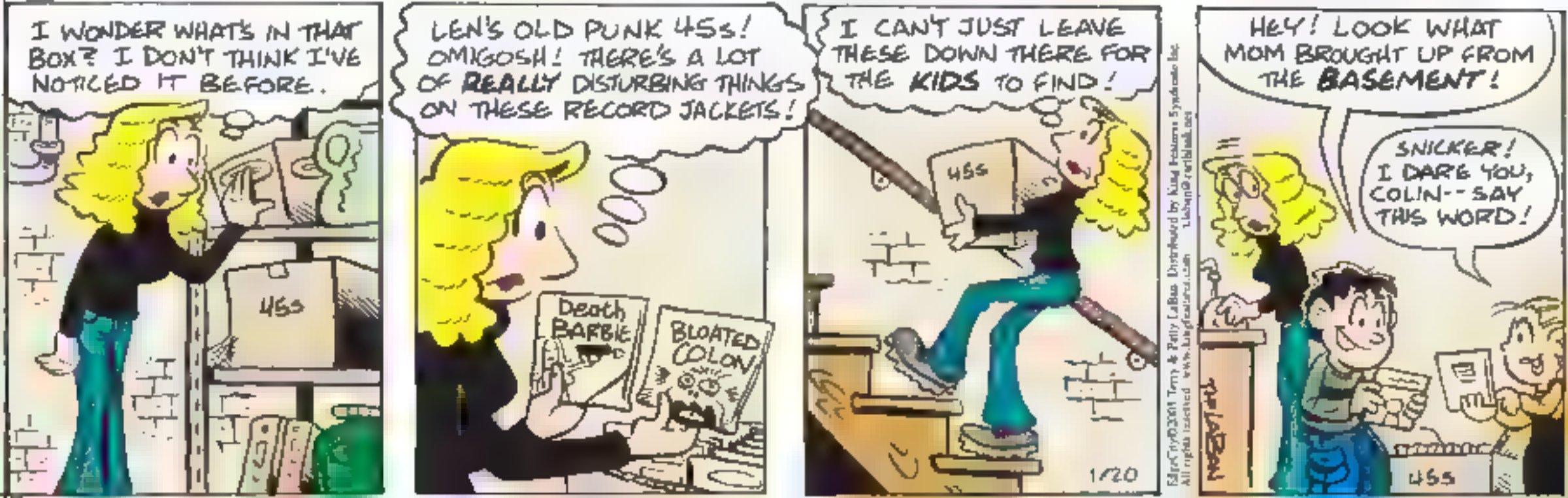
I WASN'T TILL JUST NOW!
HERE... LET ME CHECK YOU AGAIN WITH THIS LITTLE COMB!
SCRATCHA SCRATCH!
TUPLABON


HEY, RAJIV. SORRY I HAD TO LEAVE IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT MEETING.
THAT'S OK, LEN. DID YOU GUYS TAKE CARE OF YOUR DAUGHTER'S HEAD LICE ?
1/17

YEAH. IT WAS ACTUALLY NOT THAT BIG A DEAL. JUST A LITTLE EMBARRASSING.
AW, KIDS PICK UP STUFF ALL THE TIME. IT'S NO REFLECTION ON YOU.


ANYHOW, I WANTED TO DROP OFF THESE SCHEDULE SHEETS.
THAT'S OK-- JUST LEAVE THEM BY THE DOOR.
LATEX GLOVES


LEN, I SWEAR-- I'VE BEEN FEELING LITTLE BUGS CRAWLING ON ME!
COME ON, ABBY! THE LICE ARE GONE!
WELL, THERE'S SOMETHING IN THIS BED THAT'S MAKING ME ITCH!
IT'S YOUR IMAGI-NATION, DARN IT!
1/18
NO, LEN, LOOK! RIGHT THERE, ON MY PILLOW!
FOR THE LAST TIME, IT'S NOT A LOUSE!
IT'S A FLEA!
SCRATCHA SCRATCHA!


I WONDER WHAT'S IN THAT BOX? I DON'T THINK I'VE NOTICED IT BEFORE.
45s
LEN'S OLD PUNK 45s! OMIGOSH! THERE'S A LOT OF REALLY DISTURBING THINGS ON THESE RECORD JACKETS!
Death BARBIE
BLOATED COLON
I CAN'T JUST LEAVE THESE DOWN THERE FOR THE KIDS TO FIND!
45s
1/20
HEY! LOOK WHAT MOM BROUGHT UP FROM THE BASEMENT!
SNICKER! I DARE YOU, COLIN--SAY THIS WORD!
45s
THE LABAN

LEN, I FOUND THESE IN THE BASEMENT TODAY!

OH, WOW-- MY OLD PUNK 45s!

NO WAY

45s

I THINK YOU SHOULD GET RID OF THEM. THE RECORD JACKETS HAVE A LOT OF THINGS ON THEM THAT AREN'T APPROPRIATE FOR THE KIDS TO SEE!

WHAT?

1/21

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I COULDN'T DO THAT, ABBY! THESE RECORDS MEAN A LOT TO ME!

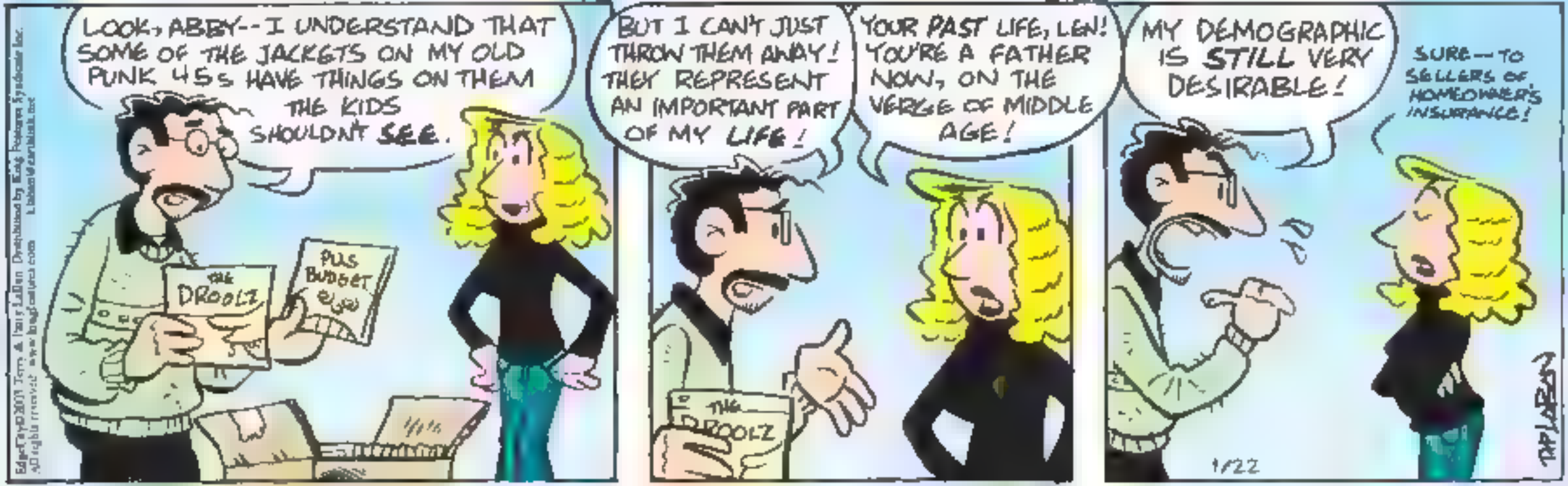
DRUNK AND STUPID

SIDE 1 SIDE 2

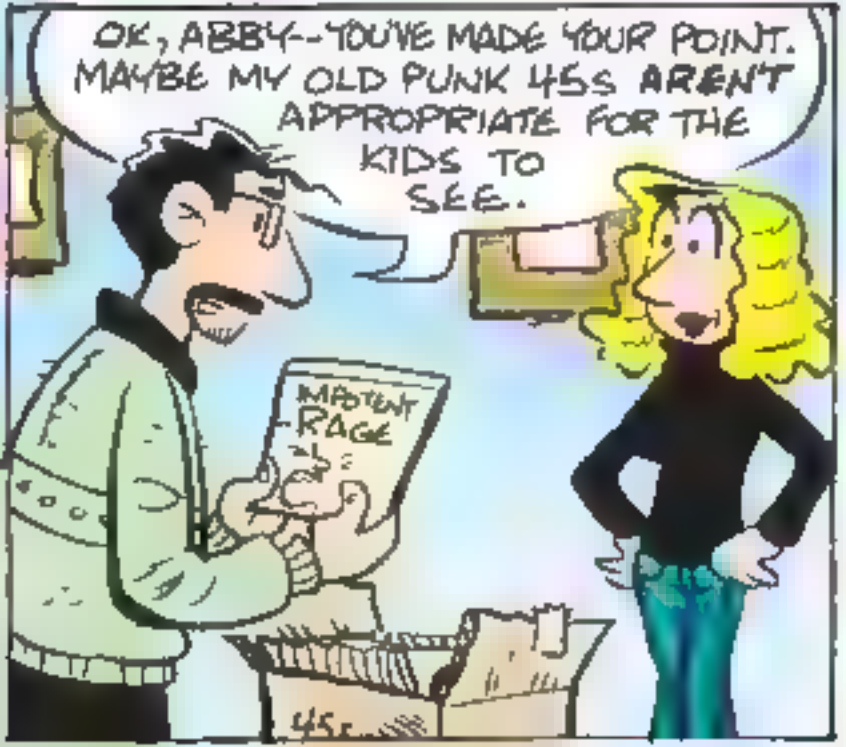
LEN, NO ONE GETS SENTIMENTAL ABOUT A BAND CALLED "THE OPEN SORES"!

SNIFF! AH, THE MEMORIES!

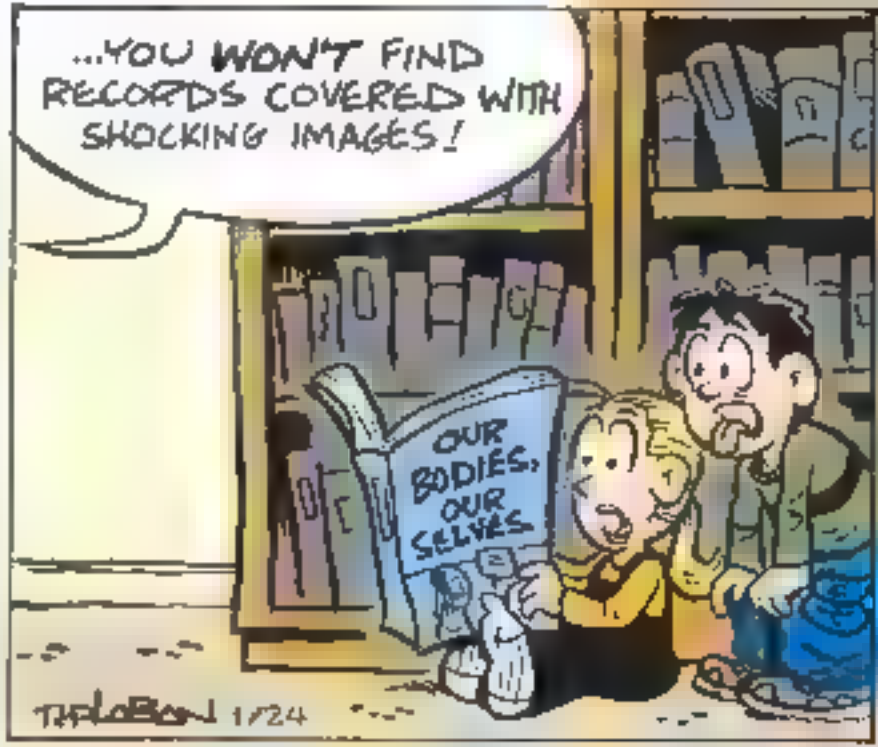
SPLASON

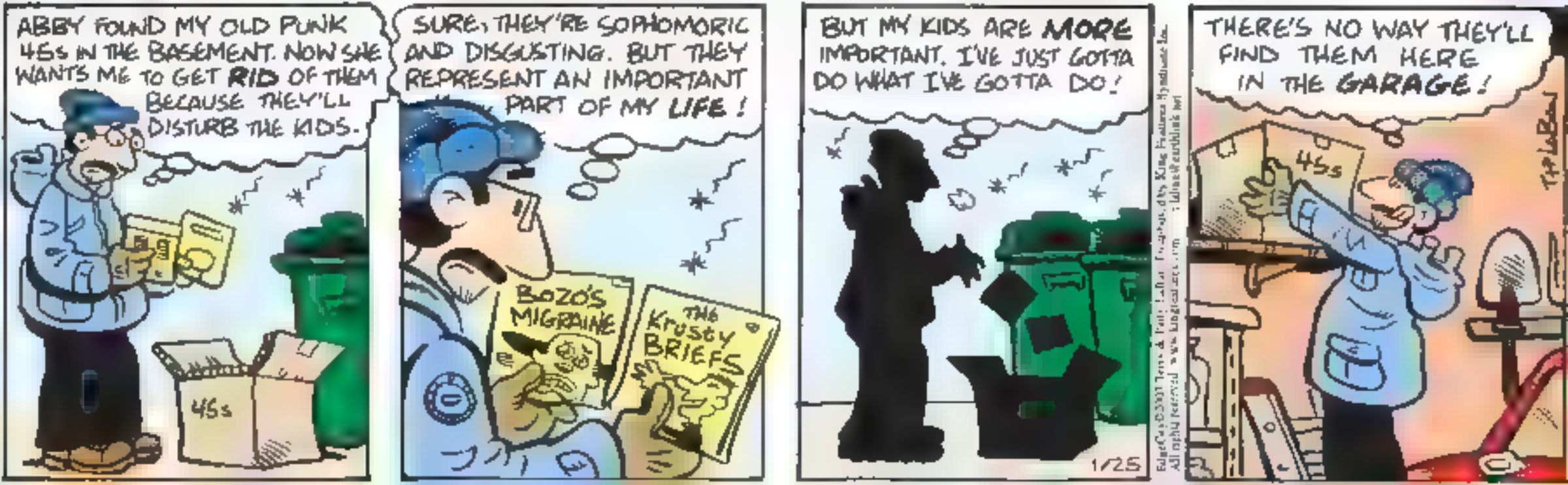

LOOK, ABBY--I UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OF THE JACKETS ON MY OLD PUNK 45s HAVE THINGS ON THEM THE KIDS SHOULDN'T SEE.
THE DROOLZ
PUS BUDDET
BUT I CAN'T JUST THROW THEM AWAY! THEY REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE!
YOUR PAST LIFE, LEN! YOU'RE A FATHER NOW, ON THE VERGE OF MIDDLE AGE!
THE DROOLZ
MY DEMOGRAPHIC IS STILL VERY DESIRABLE!
SURE--TO SELLERS OF HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE!
1/22

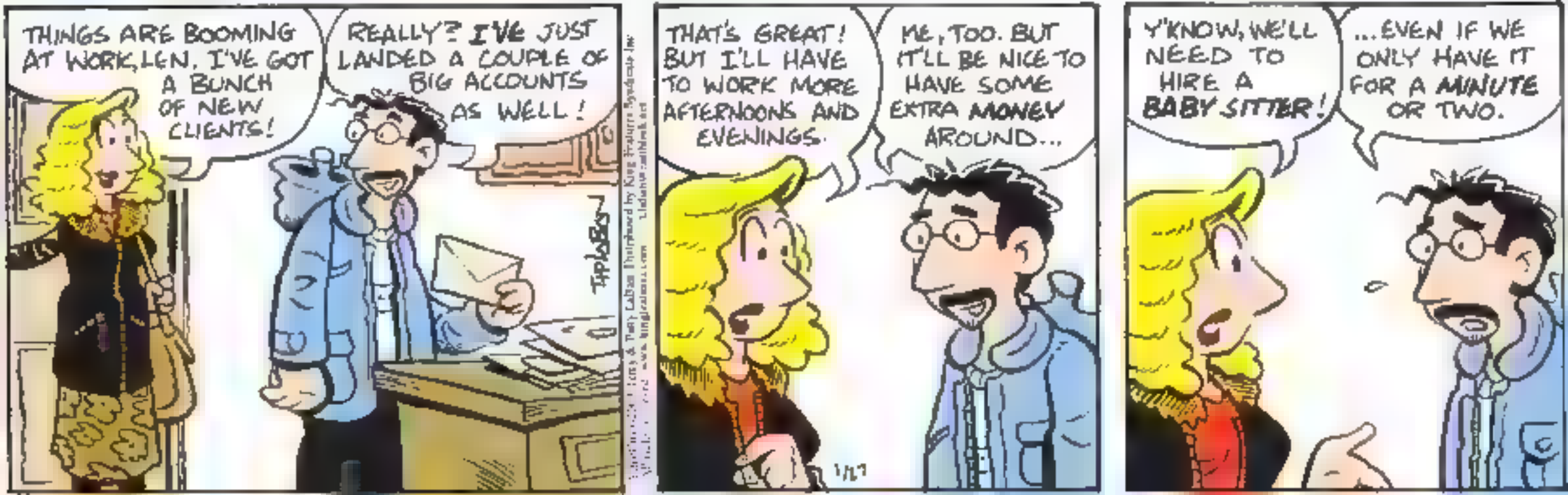
LEN, DO YOU REALLY THINK THE IMAGES ON THESE OLD PUNK 45s ARE APPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN?
NO--I JUST THINK YOU'RE OVERREACTING!
NUTZ TO YOU
THE NOZE HAIRZ
45s
IF THE KIDS HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE THINGS, WE SHOULDN'T GET RID OF THEM--WE SHOULD HAVE A DISCUSSION.
1/23
THE NOZE HAIRZ
I THINK THE KIDS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSING THEM PLENTY!
HEY, DAD--CAN I SHOW MY FRIENDS YOUR DIRTY RECORDS?


OK, ABBY--YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT. MAYBE MY OLD PUNK 45S ARE'NT APPROPRIATE FOR THE KIDS TO SEE.
IMPOTENT RAGE
45s

BUT IF I LOOKED THROUGH YOUR OLD STUFF, I BET I'D FIND SOME QUESTIONABLE MATERIAL, TOO!
WELL, I'LL TELL YOU THIS...


...YOU WON'T FIND RECORDS COVERED WITH SHOCKING IMAGES!
OUR BODIES, OUR SELVES
THALOBON 1/24

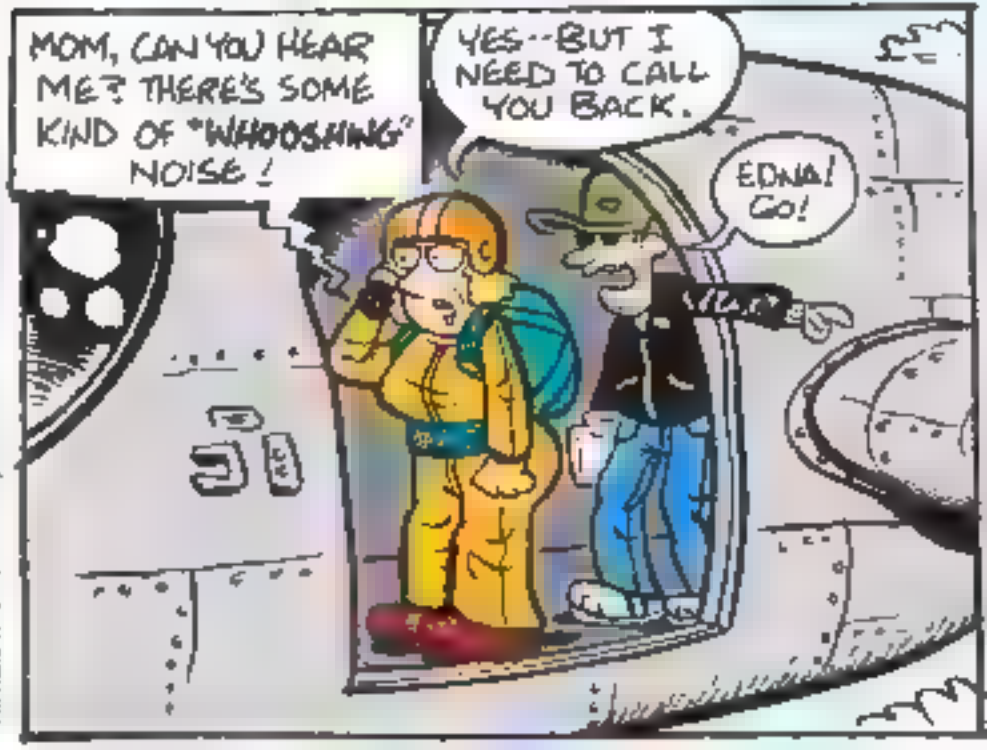

ABBY FOUND MY OLD PUNK 45s IN THE BASEMENT. NOW SHE WANTS ME TO GET RID OF THEM BECAUSE THEY'LL DISTURB THE KIDS.
45s
SURE, THEY'RE SOPHOMORIC AND DISGUSTING. BUT THEY REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE!
BOZO'S MIGRAINE
THE Krusty BRIEFS
BUT MY KIDS ARE MORE IMPORTANT. I'VE JUST GOTTA DO WHAT I'VE GOTTA DO!
1/25
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'LL FIND THEM HERE IN THE GARAGE!
45s

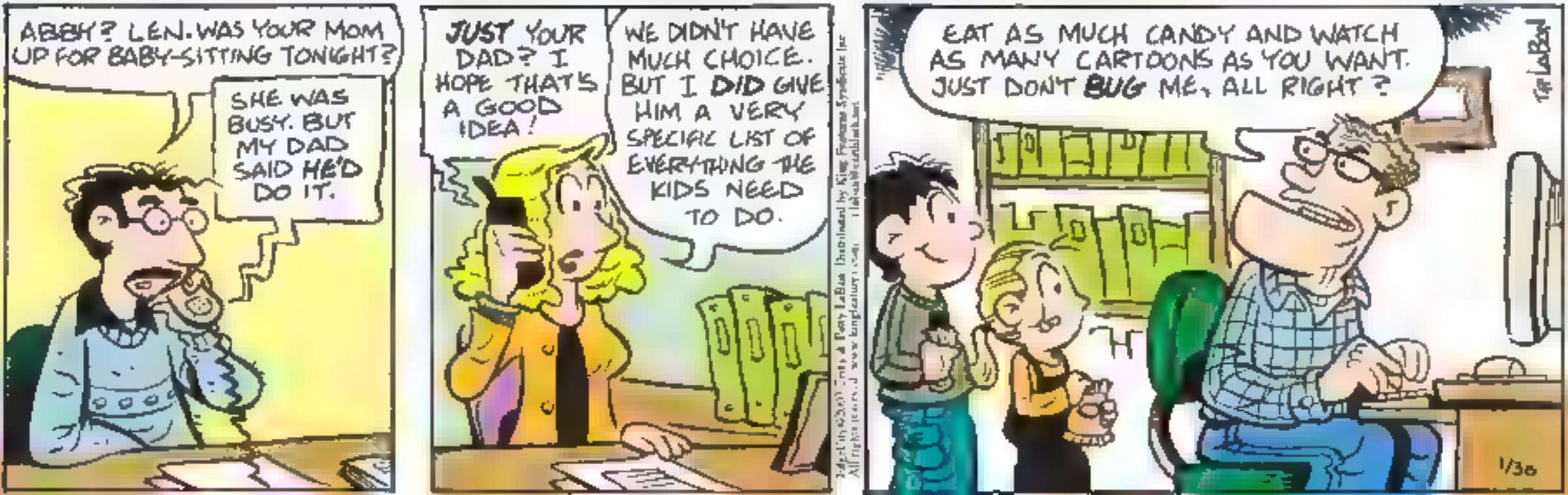

THINGS ARE BOOMING AT WORK, LEN. I'VE GOT A BUNCH OF NEW CLIENTS!
REALLY? I'VE JUST LANDED A COUPLE OF BIG ACCOUNTS AS WELL!
THAT'S GREAT! BUT I'LL HAVE TO WORK MORE AFTERNOONS AND EVENINGS.
ME, TOO. BUT IT'LL BE NICE TO HAVE SOME EXTRA MONEY AROUND...
Y'KNOW, WE'LL NEED TO HIRE A BABY SITTER!
...EVEN IF WE ONLY HAVE IT FOR A MINUTE OR TWO.

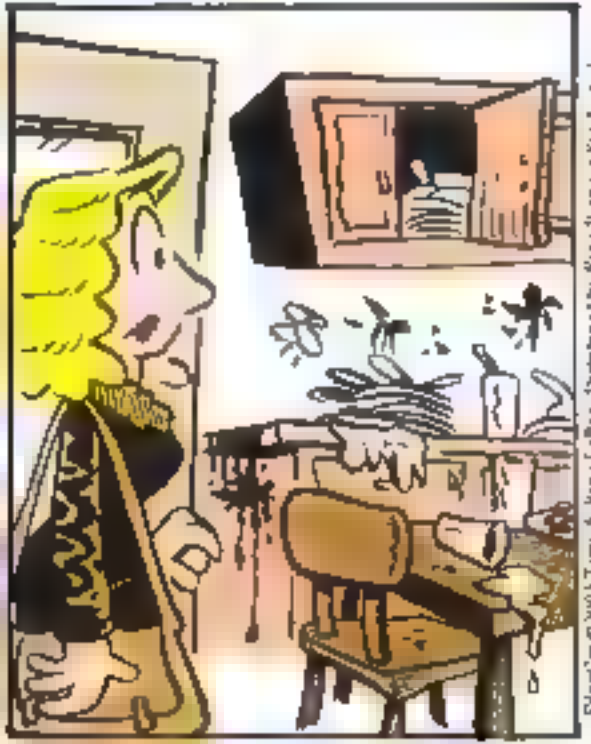
ABBY, BEFORE WE SHELL OUT FOR A BABY SITTER, WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS IF THEY'LL DO IT?
I DON'T KNOW, LEN. ONCE IN A WHILE IS OK, BUT EVERY DAY?
YOU KNOW HOW MY PARENTS CAN BE. I THINK THAT'S A LOT TO ASK!
I THINK YOUR PARENTS WOULD BE HAPPY TO HELP US OUT!
I MEAN, IT'S A LOT TO ASK OF THE KIDS!
TAPLASON

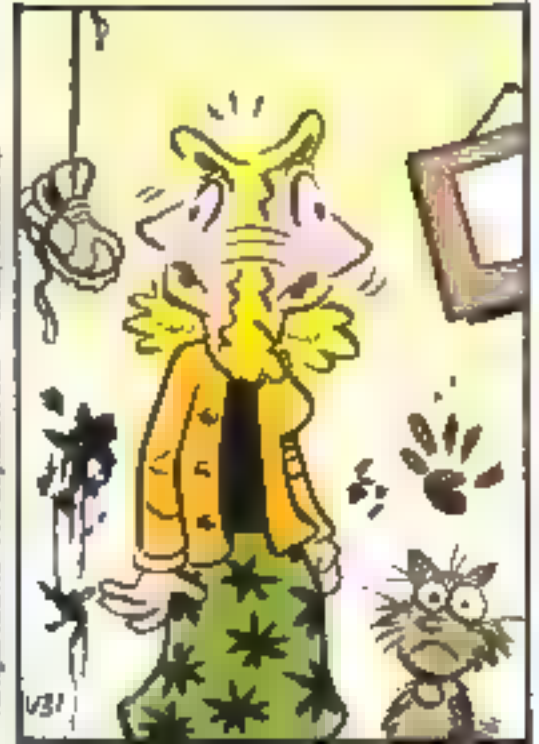
MOM, IT'S ABBY. LISTEN, LEN AND I HAVE TO WORK MORE HOURS RIGHT NOW. THINK YOU COULD BABY-SIT IN THE EVENINGS?
TAPLABON

YEAH--I KNOW YOU'RE NOT JUST SITTING AROUND WITH NOTHING TO DO. BUT IF YOU COULD JUST...
1/19


MOM, CAN YOU HEAR ME? THERE'S SOME KIND OF "WHOOSHING" NOISE!
YES--BUT I NEED TO CALL YOU BACK.
EDNA! GO!


ABBY? LEN. WAS YOUR MOM UP FOR BABY-SITTING TONIGHT?
SHE WAS BUSY. BUT MY DAD SAID HE'D DO IT.
JUST YOUR DAD? I HOPE THAT'S A GOOD IDEA!
WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE. BUT I DID GIVE HIM A VERY SPECIAL LIST OF EVERYTHING THE KIDS NEED TO DO.
EAT AS MUCH CANDY AND WATCH AS MANY CARTOONS AS YOU WANT. JUST DON'T BUG ME, ALL RIGHT?
TOM LaBAN
1/30





EVERYTHING WENT FINE, ABBY. I'LL BE HAPPY TO BABY-SIT THE GRANDKIDS WHENEVER YOU WANT!

LEN, MY DAD'S NOT WORKING OUT. WE NEED TO HIRE A REAL BABY SITTER.
I GUESS YOU'D BETTER MAKE SOME CALLS.
ME? HOW COME I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO FIND THE SITTER?
BECAUSE I'D JUST GRAB SOME NUMBERS FROM A SUPERMARKET BULLETIN BOARD AND HIRE THE FIRST PERSON WHO ANSWERED THE PHONE.
2/1
SOMETIMES IT SHOCKS ME TO REALIZE WHAT A TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP WE ACTUALLY HAVE.
I MOP THE FLOORS! DOESN'T THAT COUNT FOR SOMETHING?
BP LaBAN

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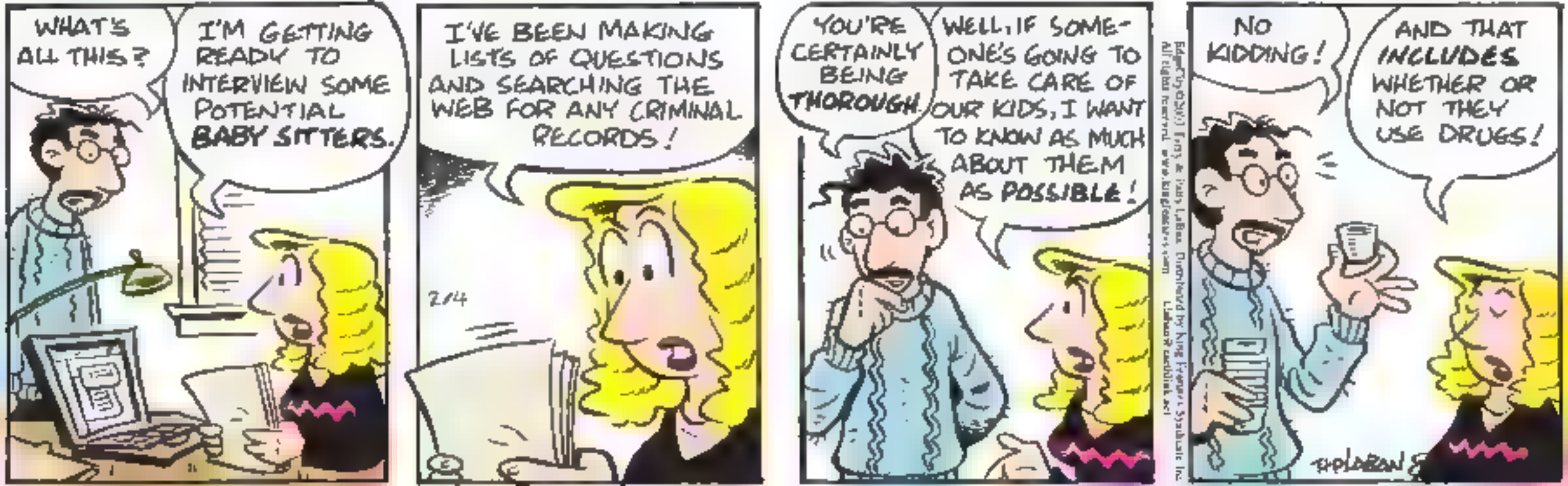
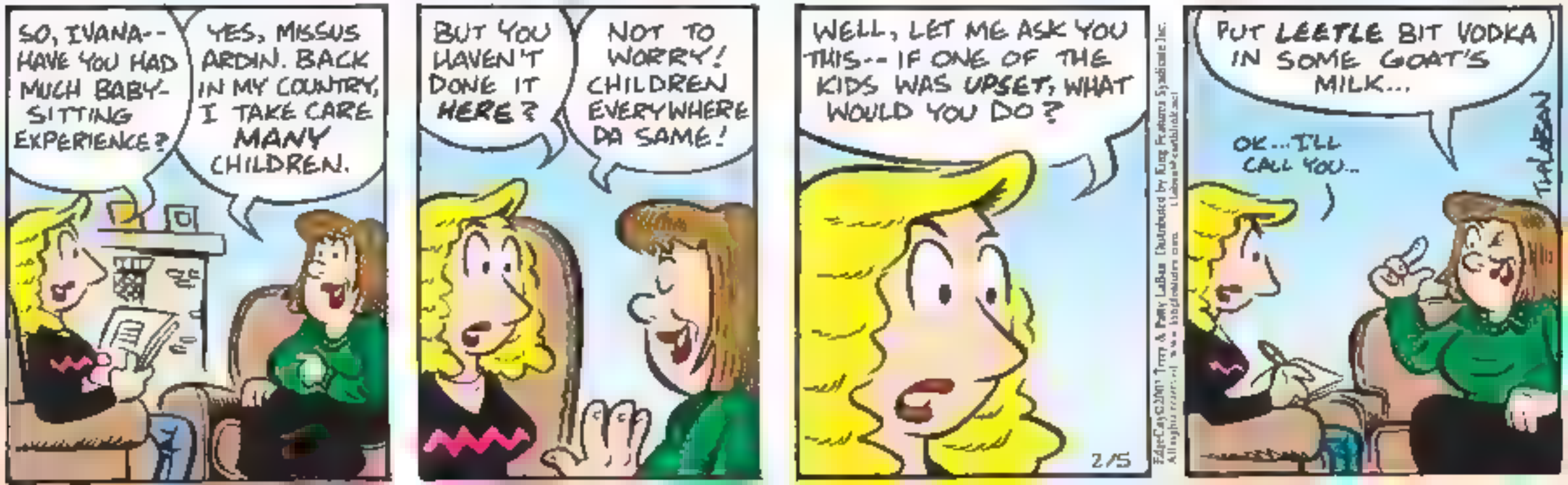
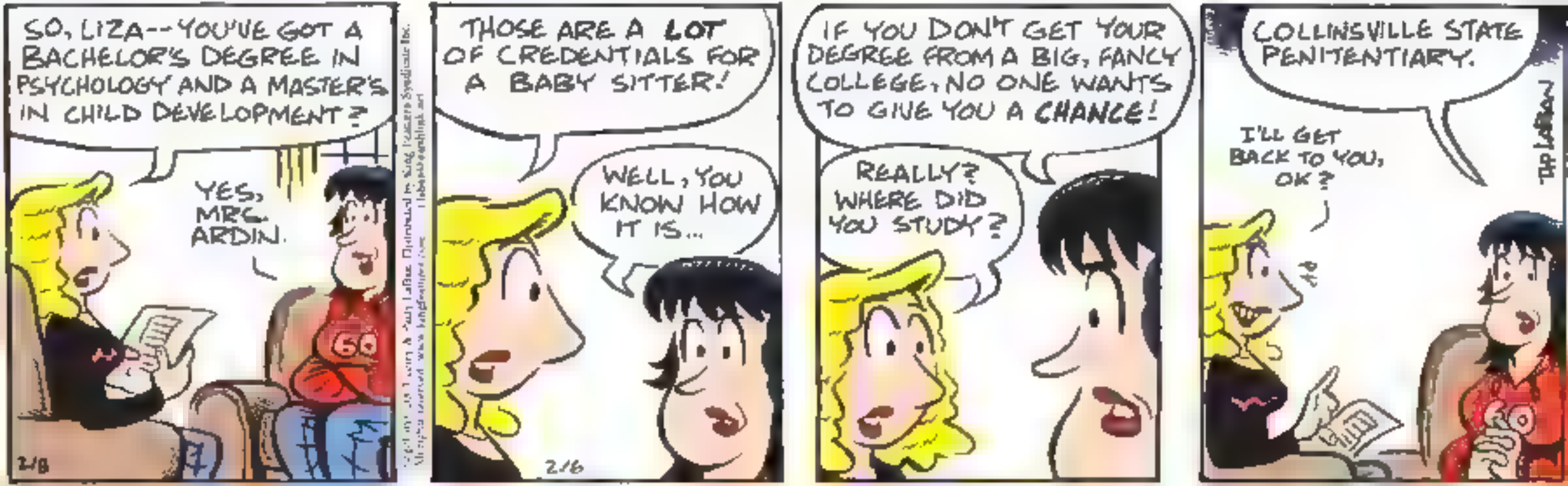
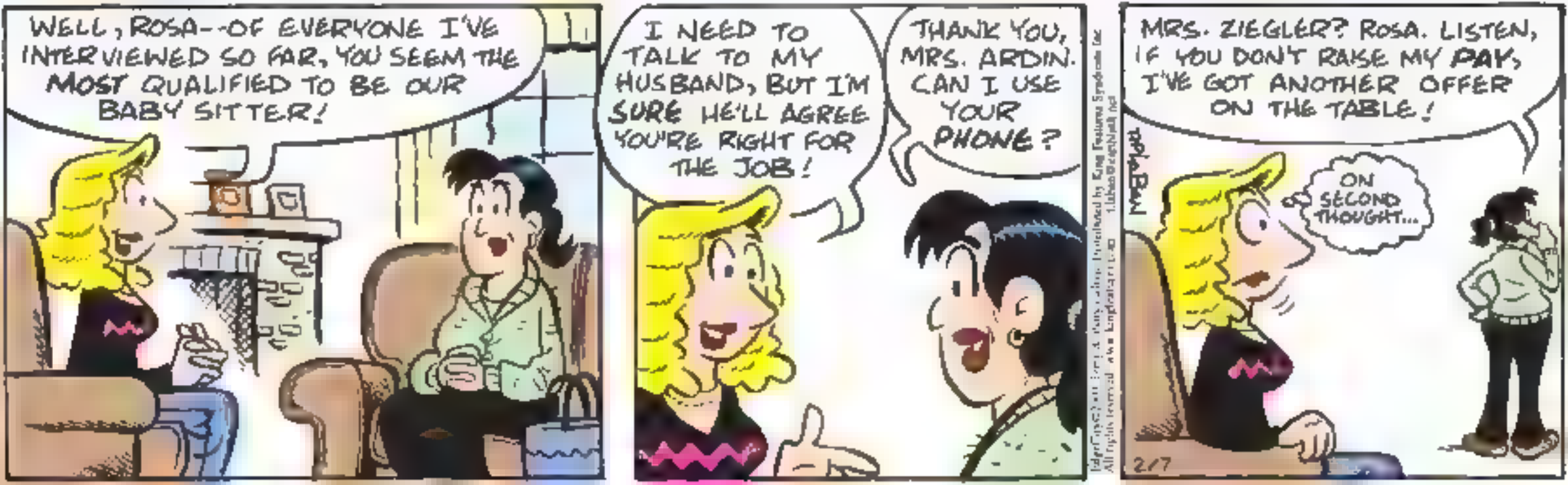
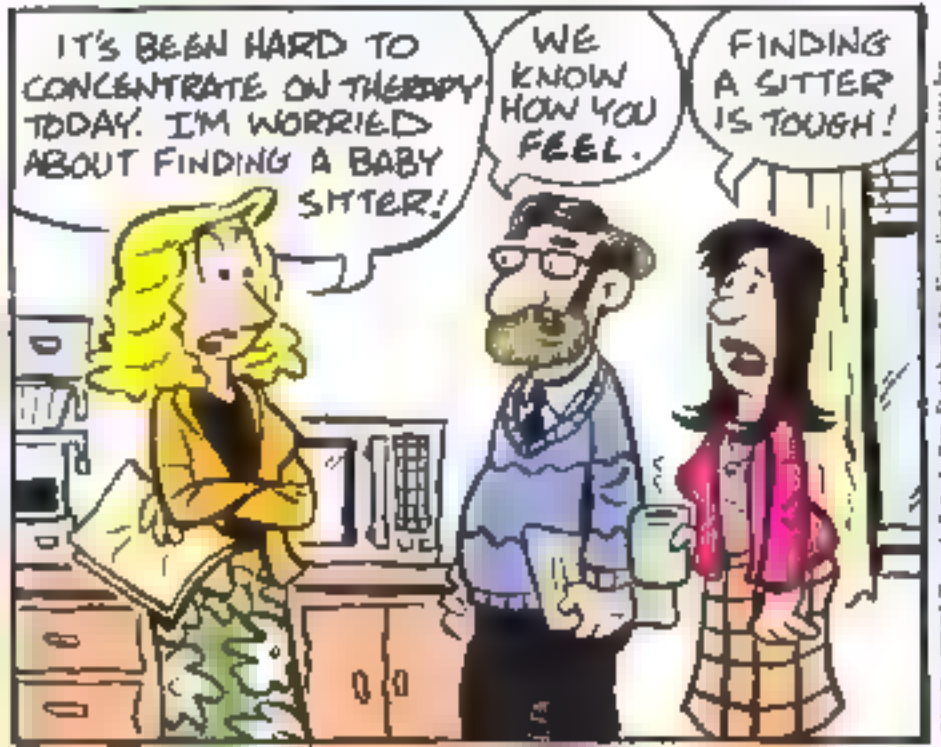

WHAT'S ALL THIS?
I'M GETTING READY TO INTERVIEW SOME POTENTIAL BABY SITTERS.
I'VE BEEN MAKING LISTS OF QUESTIONS AND SEARCHING THE WEB FOR ANY CRIMINAL RECORDS!
2/4
YOU'RE CERTAINLY BEING THOROUGH.
WELL, IF SOMEONE'S GOING TO TAKE CARE OF OUR KIDS, I WANT TO KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT THEM AS POSSIBLE!
NO KIDDING!
AND THAT INCLUDES WHETHER OR NOT THEY USE DRUGS!


SO, IVANA-- HAVE YOU HAD MUCH BABY-SITTING EXPERIENCE?
YES, MISSUS ARDIN. BACK IN MY COUNTRY, I TAKE CARE MANY CHILDREN.
BUT YOU HAVEN'T DONE IT HERE?
NOT TO WORRY! CHILDREN EVERYWHERE DA SAME!
WELL, LET ME ASK YOU THIS-- IF ONE OF THE KIDS WAS UPSET, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
2/5
PUT LEETLE BIT VODKA IN SOME GOAT'S MILK...
OK...I'LL CALL YOU...
THALABAN

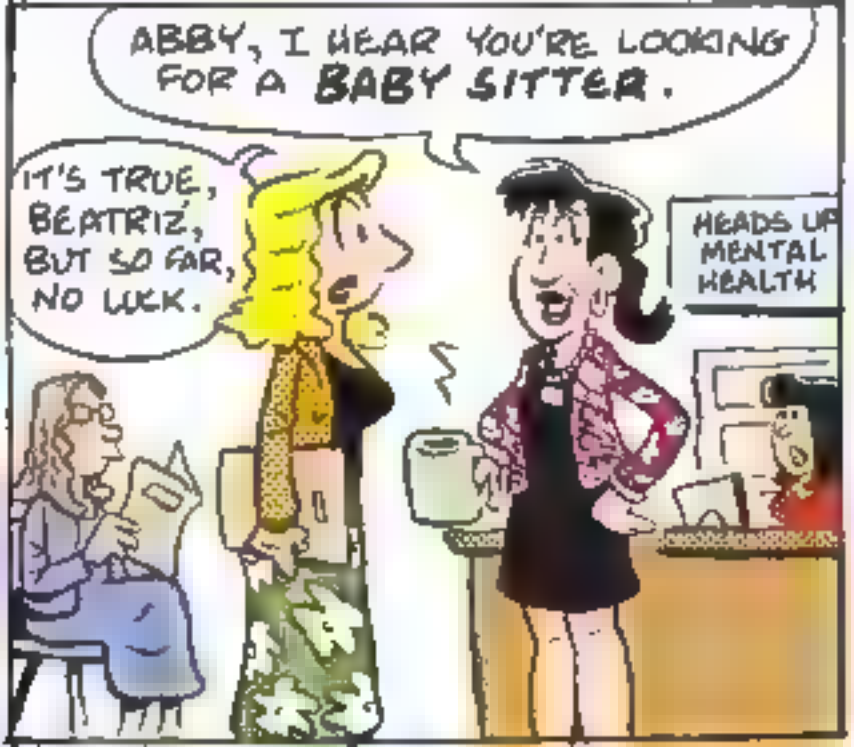

SO, LIZA--YOU'VE GOT A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND A MASTER'S IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT?
YES, MRS. ARDIN.
2/8
THOSE ARE A LOT OF CREDENTIALS FOR A BABY SITTER!
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS...
2/6
IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR DEGREE FROM A BIG, FANCY COLLEGE, NO ONE WANTS TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE!
REALLY? WHERE DID YOU STUDY?
COLLINSVILLE STATE PENITENTIARY.
I'LL GET BACK TO YOU, OK?
TIP LaRiccia

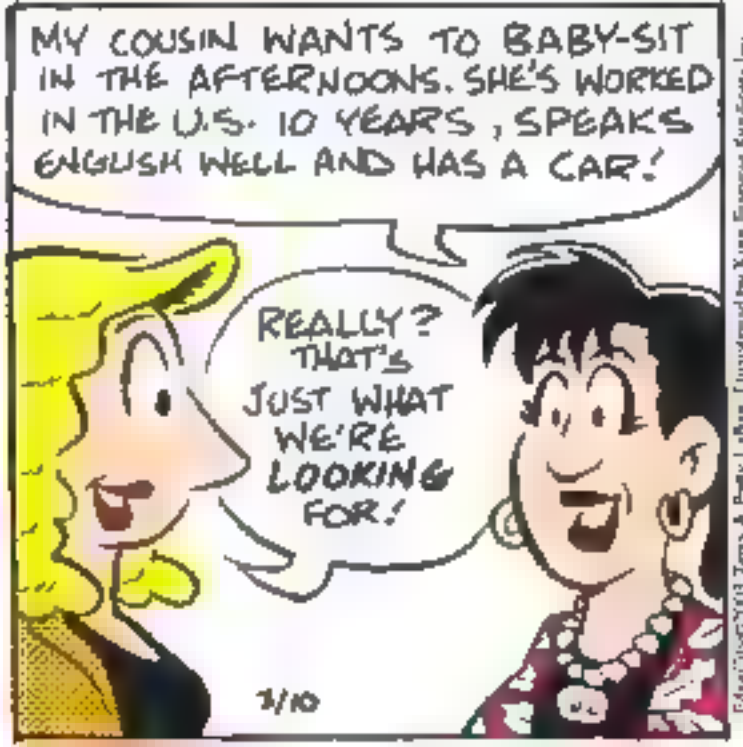

WELL, ROSA--OF EVERYONE I'VE INTERVIEWED SO FAR, YOU SEEM THE MOST QUALIFIED TO BE OUR BABY SITTER!
I NEED TO TALK TO MY HUSBAND, BUT I'M SURE HE'LL AGREE YOU'RE RIGHT FOR THE JOB!
THANK YOU, MRS. ARDIN. CAN I USE YOUR PHONE?
MRS. ZIEGLER? ROSA. LISTEN, IF YOU DON'T RAISE MY PAY, I'VE GOT ANOTHER OFFER ON THE TABLE!
ON SECOND THOUGHT...
2/7

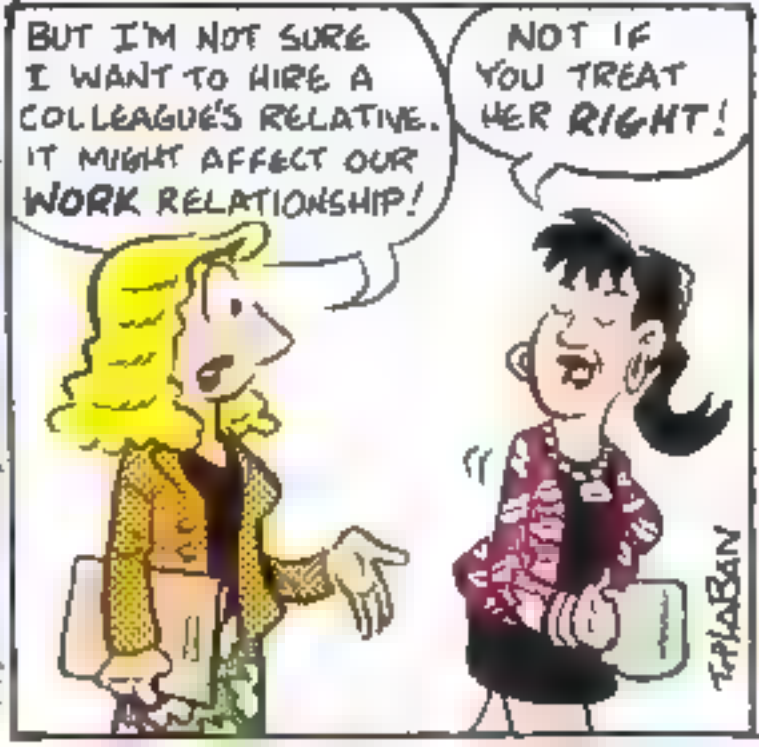

IT'S BEEN HARD TO CONCENTRATE ON THERAPY TODAY. I'M WORRIED ABOUT FINDING A BABY SITTER!
WE KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.
FINDING A SITTER IS TOUGH!

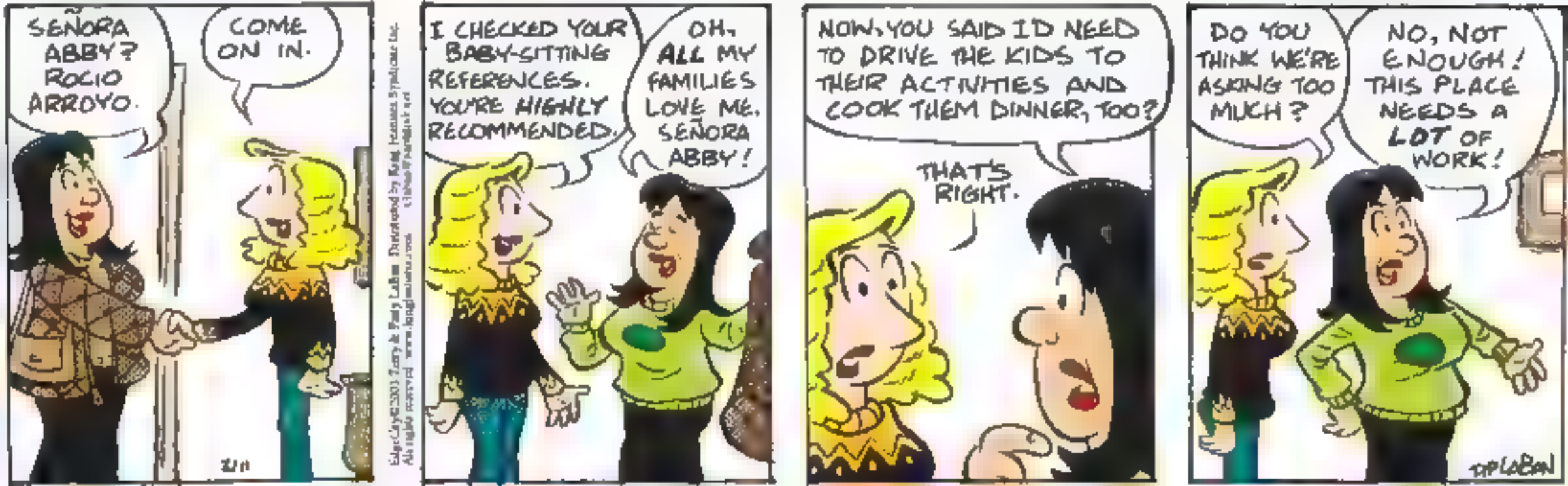
THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT. BUT DO YOU KNOW ANYBODY I CAN CALL?
2/8

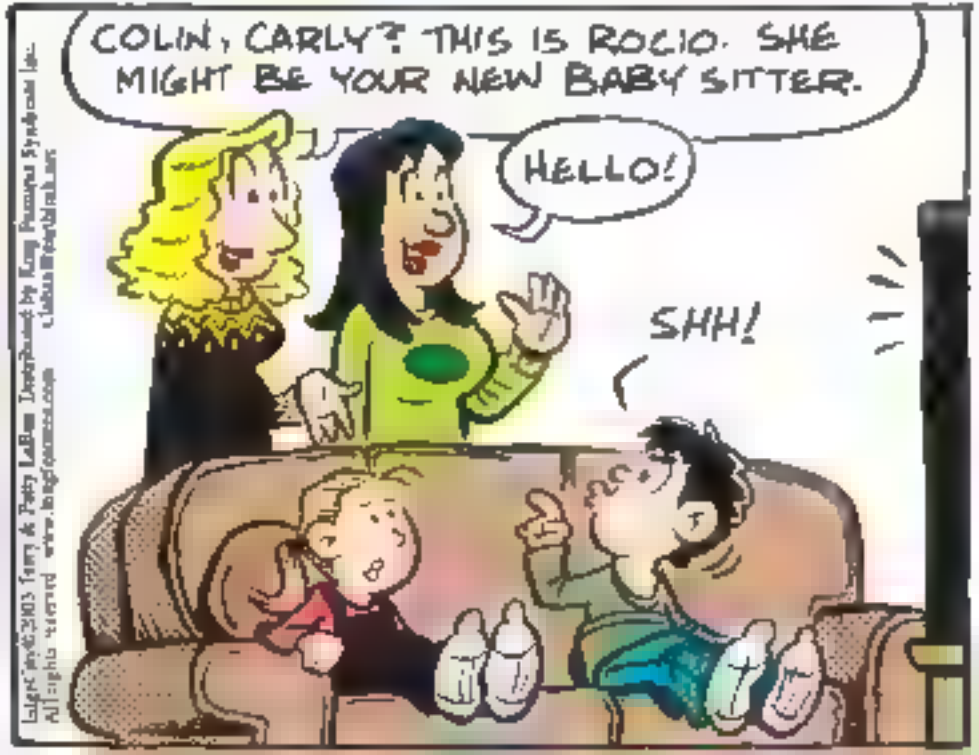
WHOA! 3:00 ALREADY?!
GOTTA GO!
LOOK, I'M NOT GOING TO STEAL YOUR SITTERS!
TAYLOR

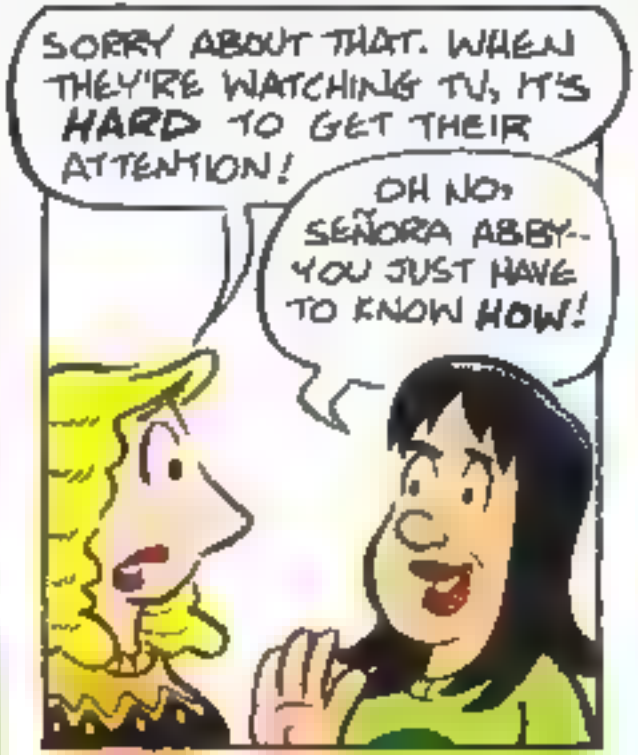

ABBY, I HEAR YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A BABY SITTER.
IT'S TRUE, BEATRIZ, BUT SO FAR, NO LUCK.
HEADS UP MENTAL HEALTH

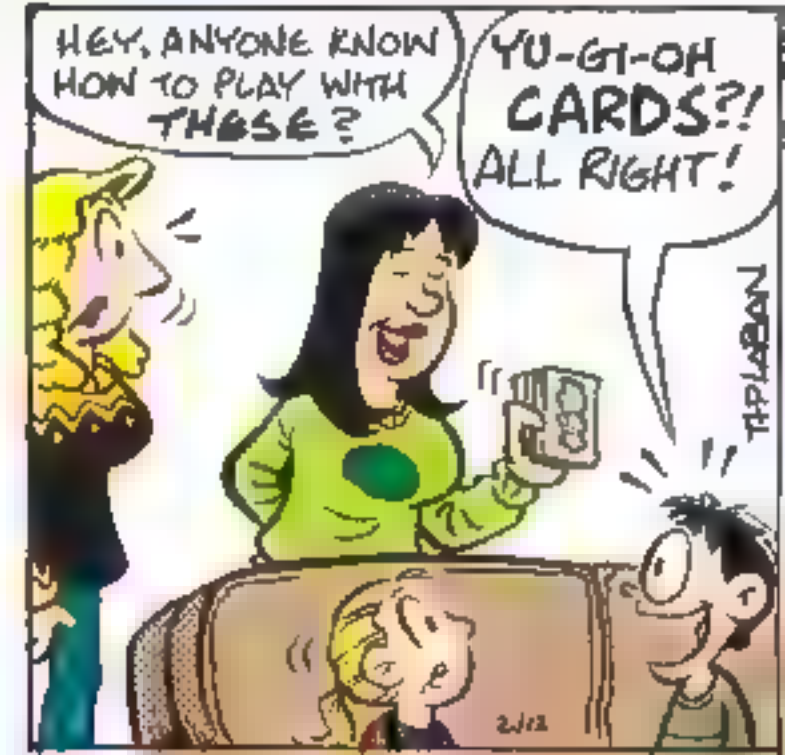

MY COUSIN WANTS TO BABY-SIT IN THE AFTERNOONS. SHE'S WORKED IN THE U.S. 10 YEARS, SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL AND HAS A CAR!
REALLY? THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR!
3/10

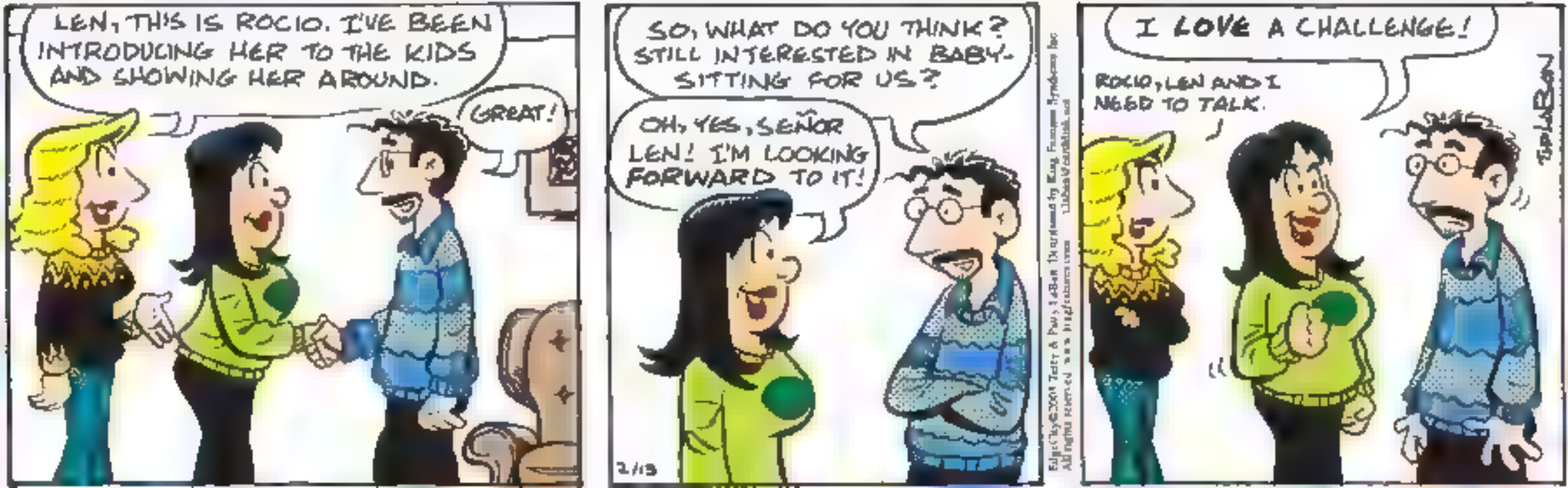

BUT I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO HIRE A COLLEAGUE'S RELATIVE. IT MIGHT AFFECT OUR WORK RELATIONSHIP!
NOT IF YOU TREAT HER RIGHT!
TAHABAN

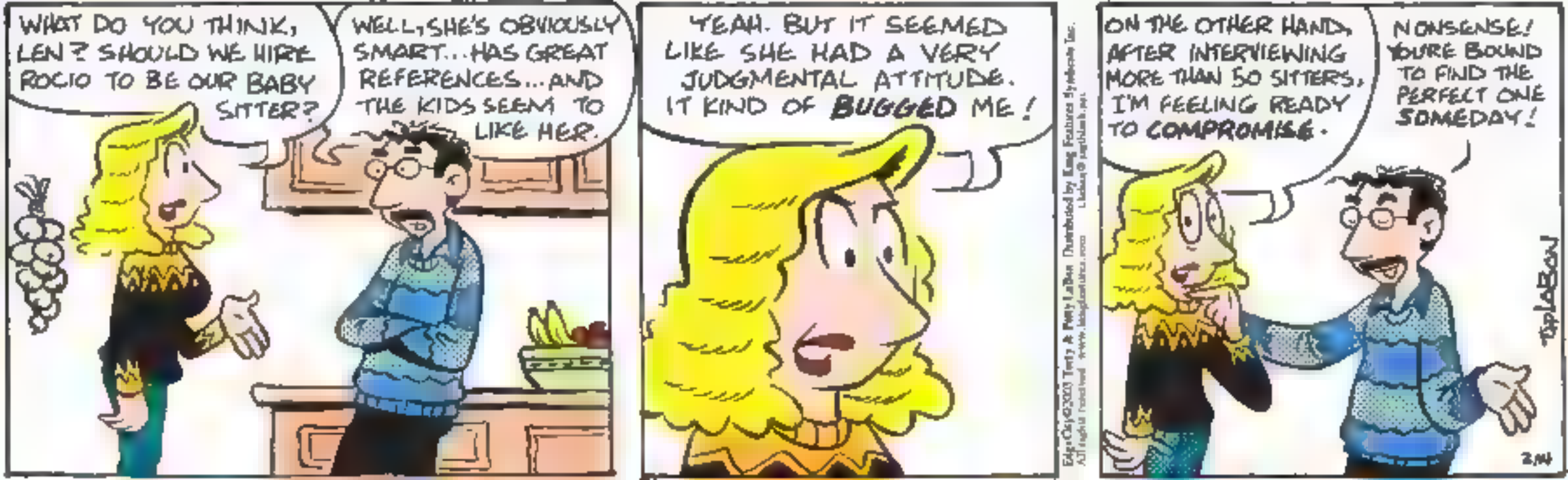

SEÑORA ABBY? ROCIO ARROYO.
COME ON IN.
I CHECKED YOUR BABY-SITTING REFERENCES. YOU'RE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
OH, ALL MY FAMILIES LOVE ME, SEÑORA ABBY!
NOW, YOU SAID I'D NEED TO DRIVE THE KIDS TO THEIR ACTIVITIES AND COOK THEM DINNER, TOO?
THAT'S RIGHT.
DO YOU THINK WE'RE ASKING TOO MUCH?
NO, NOT ENOUGH! THIS PLACE NEEDS A LOT OF WORK!
DIPLABAN

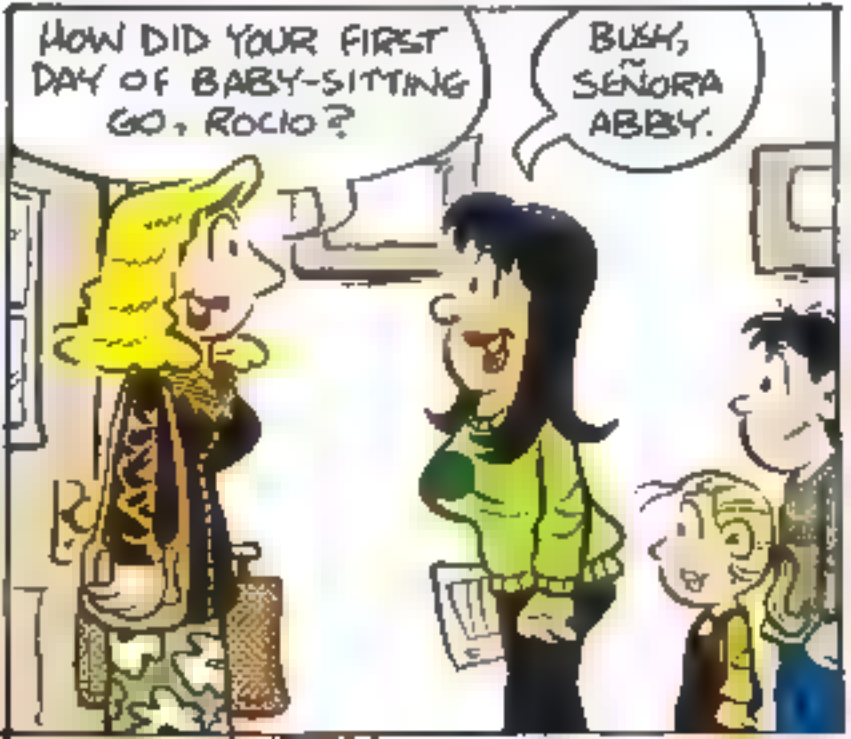

COLIN, CARLY? THIS IS ROCIO. SHE MIGHT BE YOUR NEW BABY SITTER.
HELLO!
SHH!

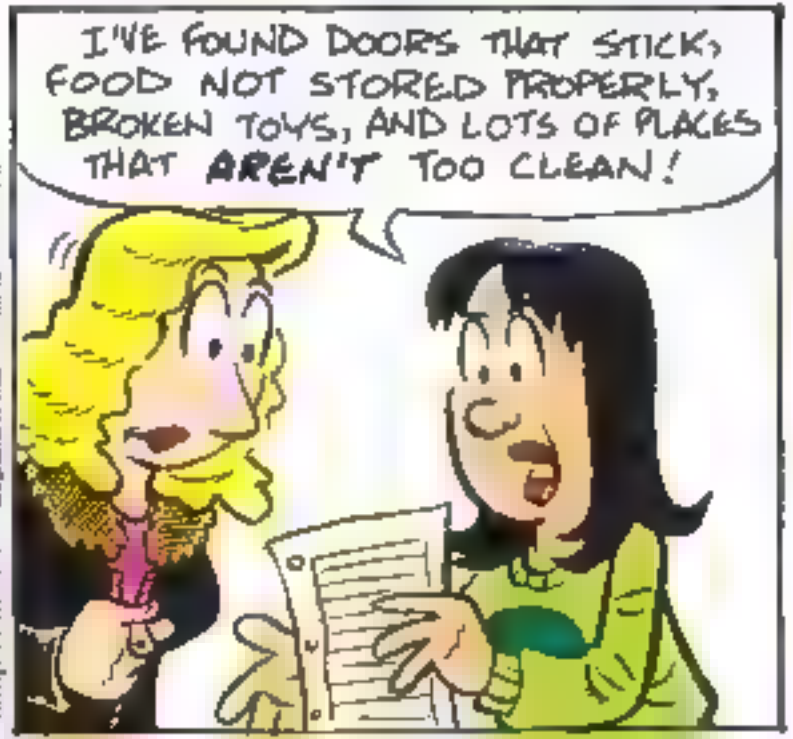

SORRY ABOUT THAT. WHEN THEY'RE WATCHING TV, IT'S HARD TO GET THEIR ATTENTION!
OH NO, SEÑORA ABBY-- YOU JUST HAVE TO KNOW HOW!


HEY, ANYONE KNOW HOW TO PLAY WITH THESE?
YU-GI-OH CARDS?! ALL RIGHT!
THPLABAN


LEN, THIS IS ROCIO. I'VE BEEN INTRODUCING HER TO THE KIDS AND SHOWING HER AROUND.
GREAT!
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK? STILL INTERESTED IN BABY-SITTING FOR US?
OH, YES, SEÑOR LEN! I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!
2/13
I LOVE A CHALLENGE!
ROCIO, LEN AND I NEED TO TALK.
TOPLARSON


WHAT DO YOU THINK, LEN? SHOULD WE HIRE ROCIO TO BE OUR BABY SITTER?
WELL, SHE'S OBVIOUSLY SMART... HAS GREAT REFERENCES... AND THE KIDS SEEM TO LIKE HER.
YEAH. BUT IT SEEMED LIKE SHE HAD A VERY JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE. IT KIND OF BUGGED ME!
ON THE OTHER HAND, AFTER INTERVIEWING MORE THAN 50 SITTERS, I'M FEELING READY TO COMPROMISE.
NONSENSE! YOU'RE BOUND TO FIND THE PERFECT ONE SOMEDAY!
TRIBUNE
2/14

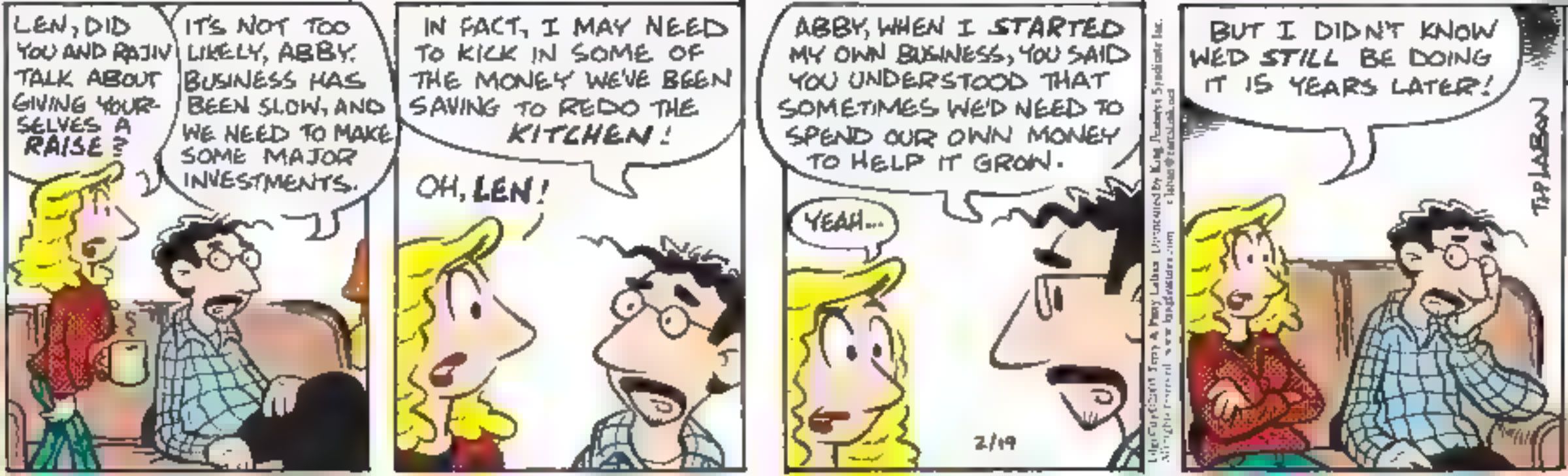

HOW DID YOUR FIRST DAY OF BABY-SITTING GO, ROCIO?
BUSY, SEÑORA ABBY.

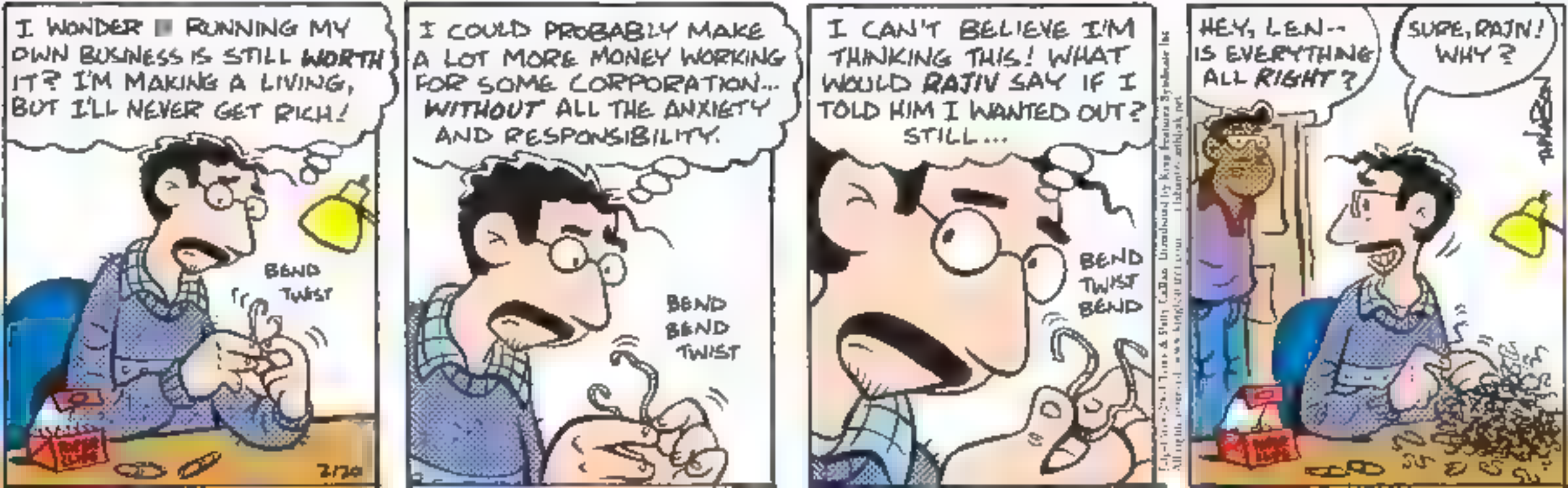

I'VE FOUND DOORS THAT STICK, FOOD NOT STORED PROPERLY, BROKEN TOYS, AND LOTS OF PLACES THAT AREN'T TOO CLEAN!

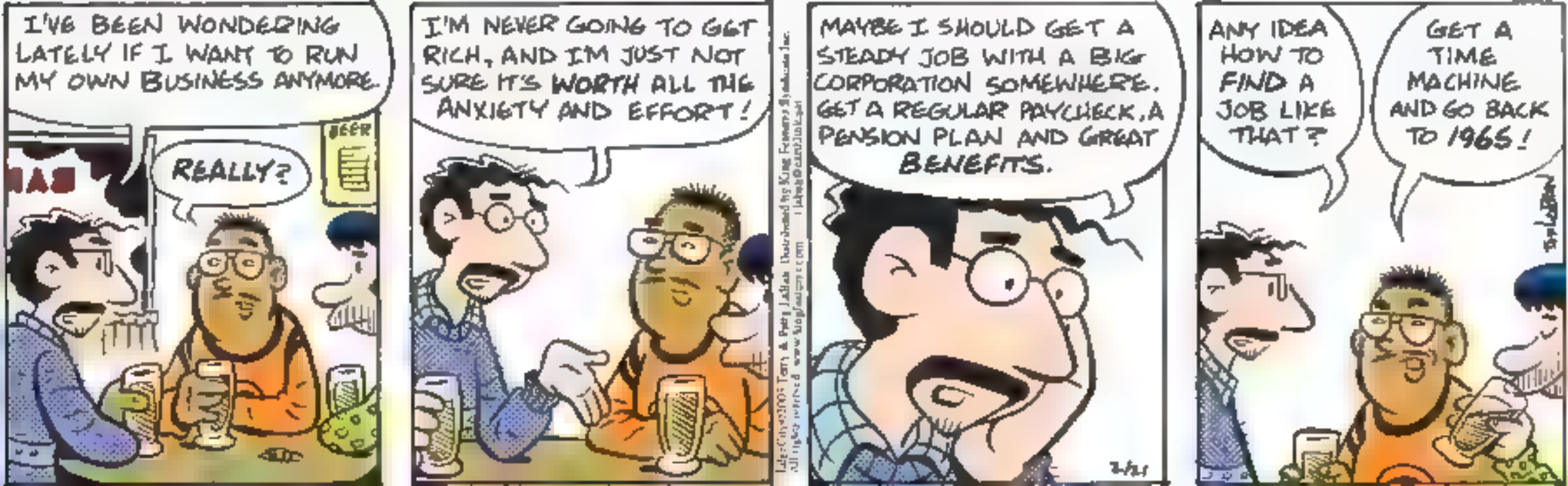
I MEANT HOW DID IT GO WITH THE KIDS?
OH... GREAT! THEY HELPED ME MAKE YOUR LIST!
MOM, HAVE YOU LOOKED IN THE BACK OF THE PANTRY? YUCK!
2/18

OUR EXPENSES HAVE GONE UP LATELY.
YEAH... I'D REALLY LIKE TO GIVE MYSELF A RAISE SOON.
BUT IT DEPENDS ON HOW MY BUSINESS IS DOING... WHO WE HAVE TO HIRE, WHAT INVESTMENTS WE NEED TO MAKE...
2/17
THE HARD THING ABOUT OWNING A BUSINESS IS THAT YOU CAN'T GET WHAT YOU WANT BY JUST KISSING UP TO THE BOSS.
I THOUGHT THAT'S WHAT YOU LIKED ABOUT IT!
TAPLABAN

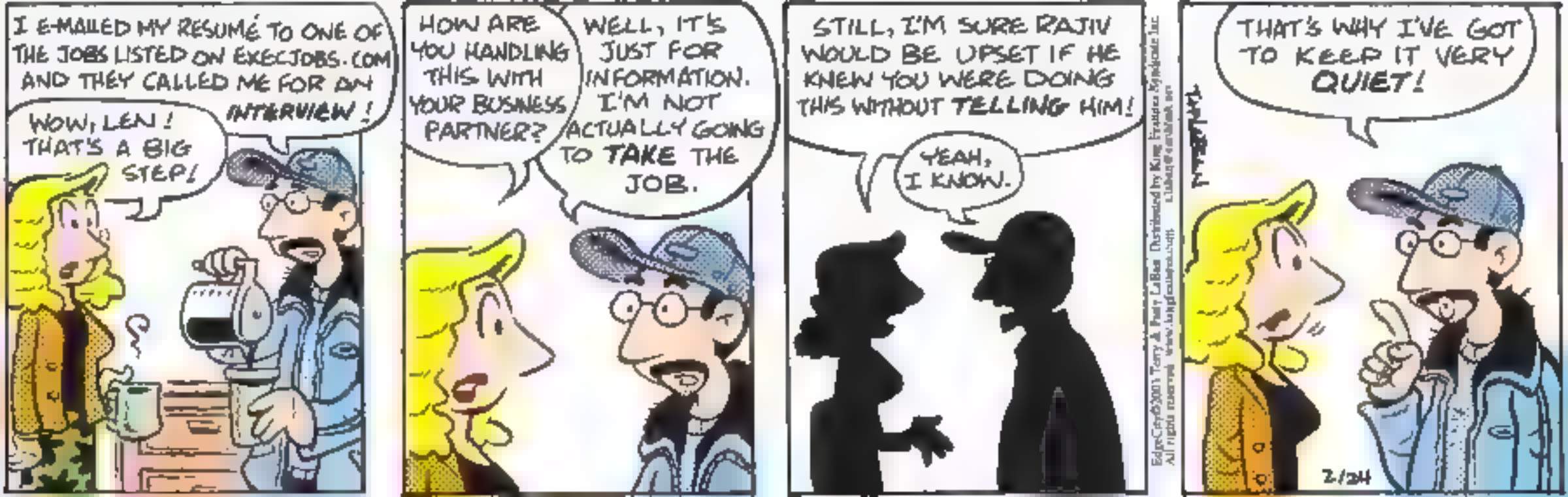
SO, RAJIV--THINK OUR BUSINESS IS DOING WELL ENOUGH TO GIVE OURSELVES A DECENT RAISE?
I DON'T KNOW, LEN. BUSINESS HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN BOOMING...
PLUS, TO STAY COMPETITIVE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SOME MAJOR INVESTMENTS THIS YEAR.
2/18
CAN WE AT LEAST GIVE OURSELVES A NOT-THAT-DECENT RAISE?
ACTUALLY, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU AND ABBY COULD PUT IN AN EXTRA 20 GRAND.


LEN, DID YOU AND RAJIV TALK ABOUT GIVING YOURSELVES A RAISE?
IT'S NOT TOO LIKELY, ABBY. BUSINESS HAS BEEN SLOW, AND WE NEED TO MAKE SOME MAJOR INVESTMENTS.
IN FACT, I MAY NEED TO KICK IN SOME OF THE MONEY WE'VE BEEN SAVING TO REDO THE KITCHEN!
OH, LEN!
ABBY, WHEN I STARTED MY OWN BUSINESS, YOU SAID YOU UNDERSTOOD THAT SOMETIMES WE'D NEED TO SPEND OUR OWN MONEY TO HELP IT GROW.
YEAH...
2/19
BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WED STILL BE DOING IT IS YEARS LATER!
TAP LABAN


I WONDER ■ RUNNING MY OWN BUSINESS IS STILL WORTH IT? I'M MAKING A LIVING, BUT I'LL NEVER GET RICH!
BEND TWIST
I COULD PROBABLY MAKE A LOT MORE MONEY WORKING FOR SOME CORPORATION... WITHOUT ALL THE ANXIETY AND RESPONSIBILITY.
BEND BEND TWIST
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M THINKING THIS! WHAT WOULD RAJIV SAY IF I TOLD HIM I WANTED OUT? STILL...
BEND TWIST BEND
HEY, LEN-- IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
SURE, RAJIV! WHY?

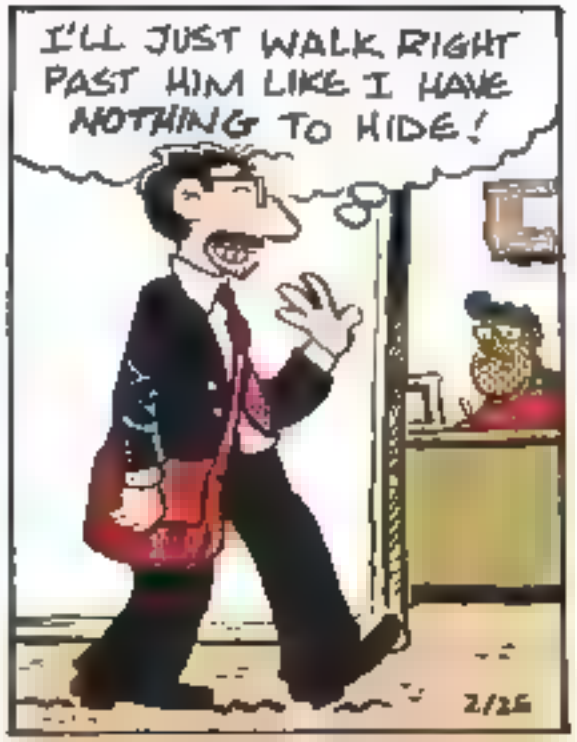

I'VE BEEN WONDERING LATELY IF I WANT TO RUN MY OWN BUSINESS ANYMORE.
REALLY?
BEER
I'M NEVER GOING TO GET RICH, AND I'M JUST NOT SURE IT'S WORTH ALL THE ANXIETY AND EFFORT!
MAYBE I SHOULD GET A STEADY JOB WITH A BIG CORPORATION SOMEWHERE. GET A REGULAR PAYCHECK, A PENSION PLAN AND GREAT BENEFITS.
ANY IDEA HOW TO FIND A JOB LIKE THAT?
GET A TIME MACHINE AND GO BACK TO 1965!

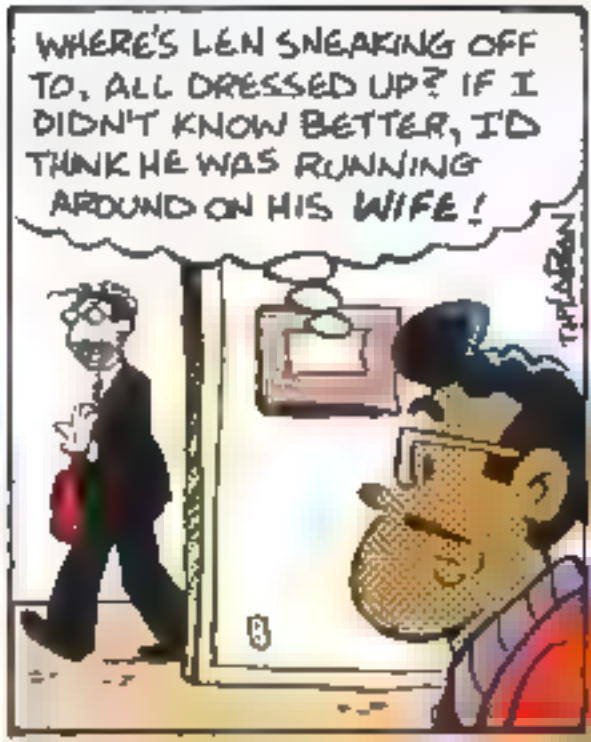
DID YOU HAVE FUN WITH THE GUYS?
YUP. I TOLD THEM A LITTLE ABOUT MY CAREER CONFLICTS.
WAS THAT HELPFUL?
YEAH. SAM TOLD ME ABOUT A WEB SITE THAT LISTS A LOT OF CORPORATE JOBS I MIGHT QUALIFY FOR.
IT'S NOT ANYTHING I'D PURSUE IMMEDIATELY, OF COURSE. BUT IT'S NICE TO KNOW IT'S THERE.
EXEC. JOB

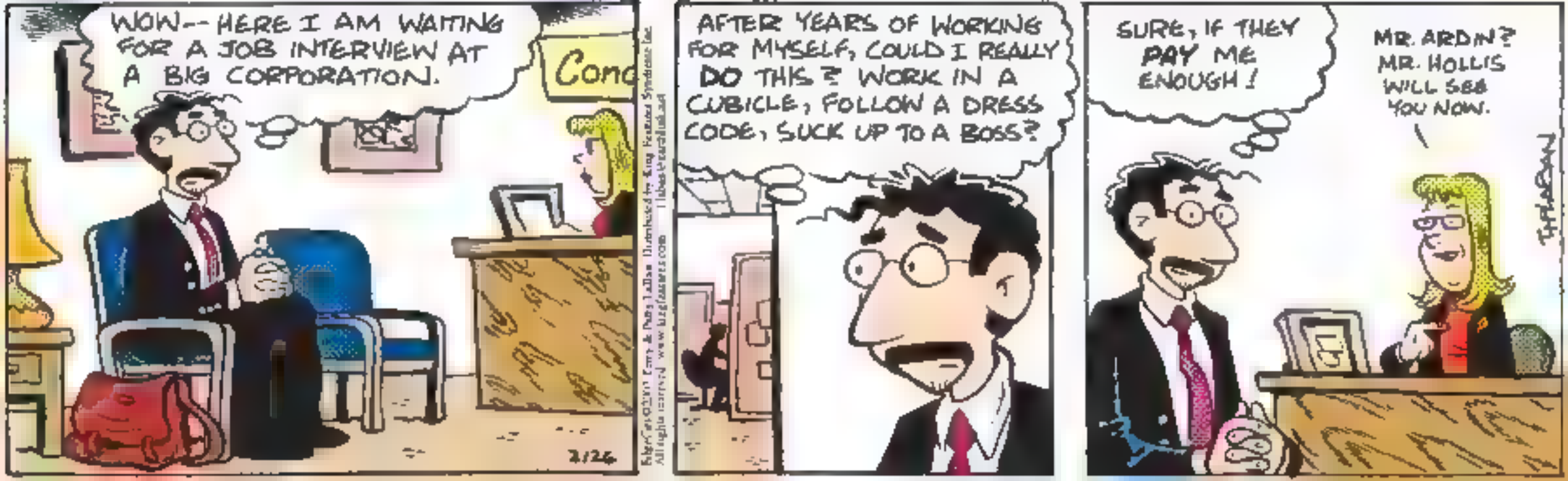

I E-MAILED MY RESUMÉ TO ONE OF THE JOBS LISTED ON EXECJOBS.COM AND THEY CALLED ME FOR AN INTERVIEW!
WOW, LEN! THAT'S A BIG STEP!
HOW ARE YOU HANDLING THIS WITH YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER?
WELL, IT'S JUST FOR INFORMATION. I'M NOT ACTUALLY GOING TO TAKE THE JOB.
STILL, I'M SURE RAJIV WOULD BE UPSET IF HE KNEW YOU WERE DOING THIS WITHOUT TELLING HIM!
YEAH, I KNOW.
THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO KEEP IT VERY QUIET!
2/24

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M ACTUALLY GOING TO A JOB INTERVIEW! I DON'T INTEND TO REALLY TAKE THE JOB, BUT STILL...

THE WORST PART IS GOING BEHIND MY BUSINESS PARTNER'S BACK. BUT IF RAJIV KNEW WHAT I WAS UP TO, HE'D FREAK!


I'LL JUST WALK RIGHT PAST HIM LIKE I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE!
2/26

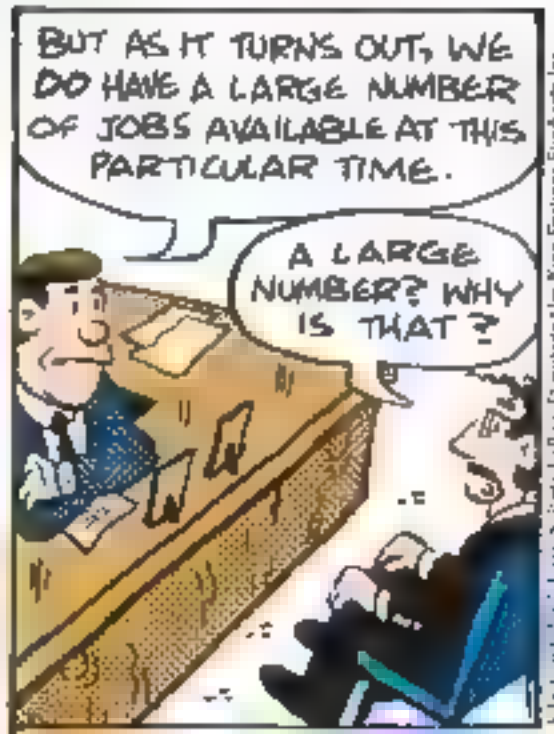

WHERE'S LEN SNEAKING OFF TO, ALL DRESSED UP? IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D THINK HE WAS RUNNING AROUND ON HIS WIFE!


WOW-- HERE I AM WAITING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW AT A BIG CORPORATION.
Come
2/26
AFTER YEARS OF WORKING FOR MYSELF, COULD I REALLY DO THIS? WORK IN A CUBICLE, FOLLOW A DRESS CODE, SUCK UP TO A BOSS?
SURE, IF THEY PAY ME ENOUGH!
MR. ARDIN? MR. HOLLIS WILL SEE YOU NOW.
THALDAN

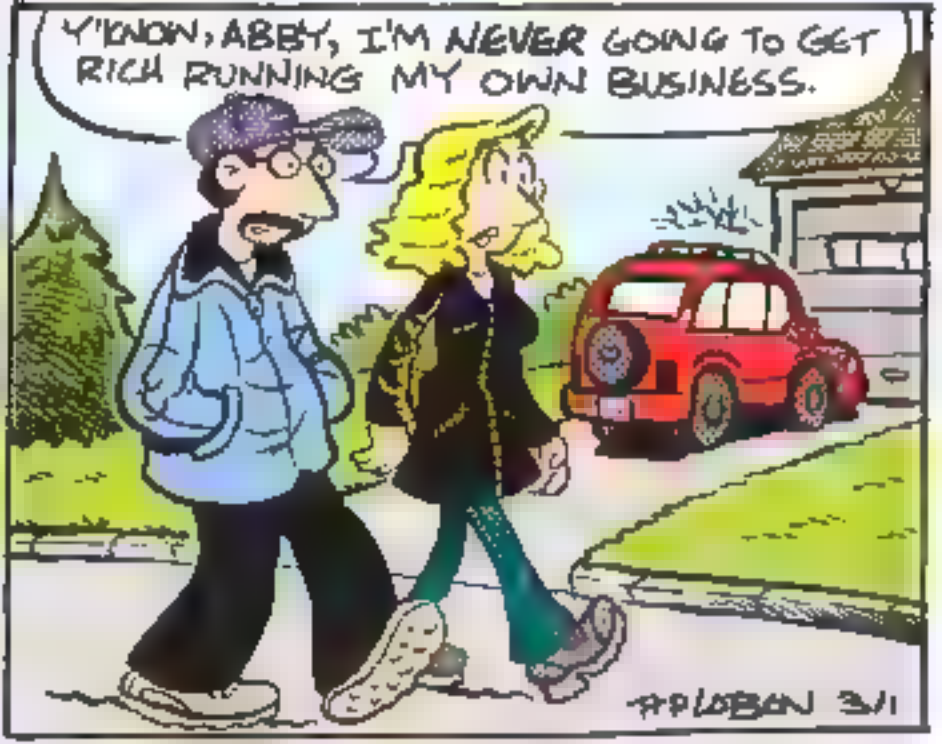
SO, LEN -- FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?
THAT'S RIGHT.
AND NOW YOU'RE INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR OUR CORPORATION? CAN YOU TELL ME WHY?
RUNNING THE BUSINESS HAS JUST BECOME TOO DIFFICULT. I'M TIRED OF ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES.
I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT YOU'D HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES HERE AS WELL!
I GUESS THAT'S TRUE...

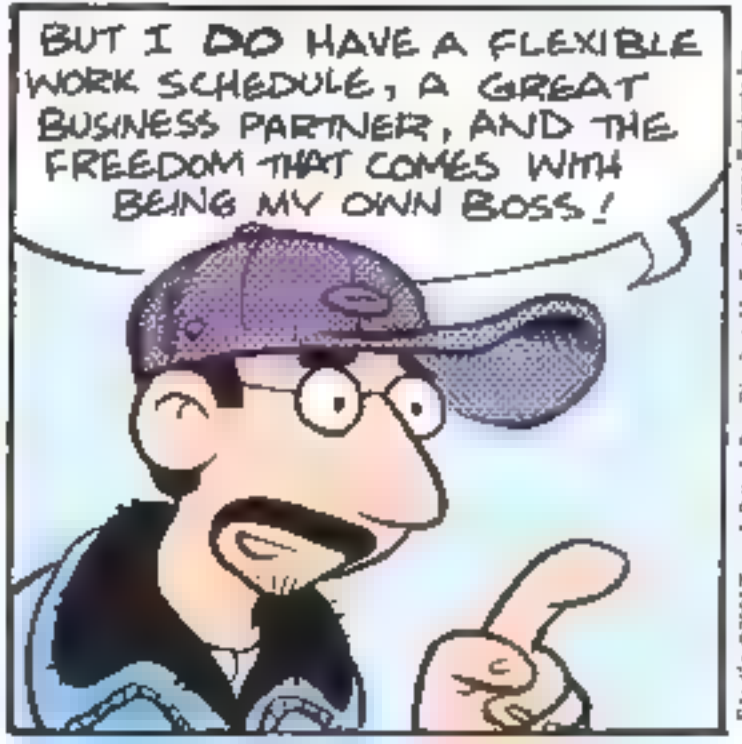
I'VE RUN MY OWN BUSINESS FOR A LONG TIME. BUT LATELY I'VE BEEN ATTRACTED TO THE SECURITY OF WORKING FOR A BIG CORPORATION.
WELL, LEN...

...AS I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD, BIG CORPORATIONS AREN'T AS SECURE AS THEY USED TO BE.
2/28


BUT AS IT TURNS OUT, WE DO HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF JOBS AVAILABLE AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME.
A LARGE NUMBER? WHY IS THAT?

WE'VE HAD A LOT OF TURNOVER SINCE OUR CEO WENT TO JAIL.
THE LABOR





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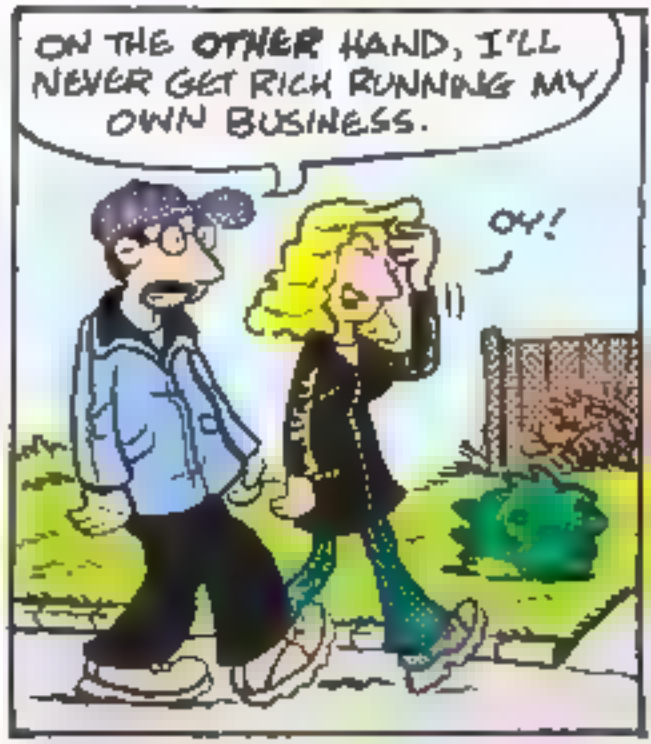
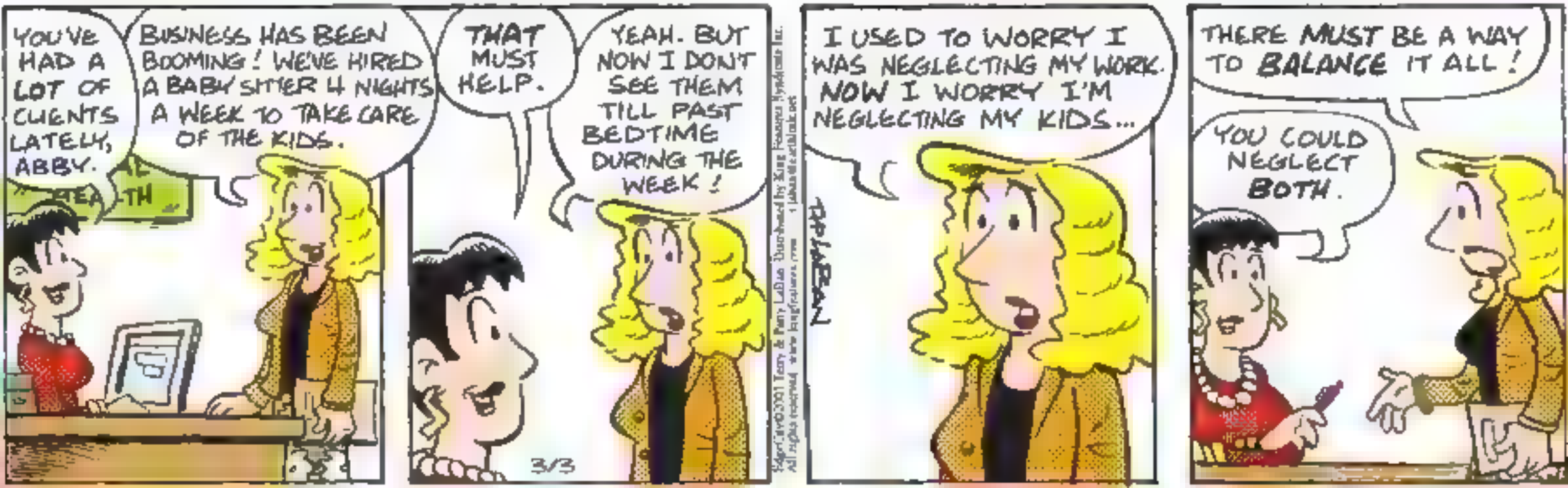
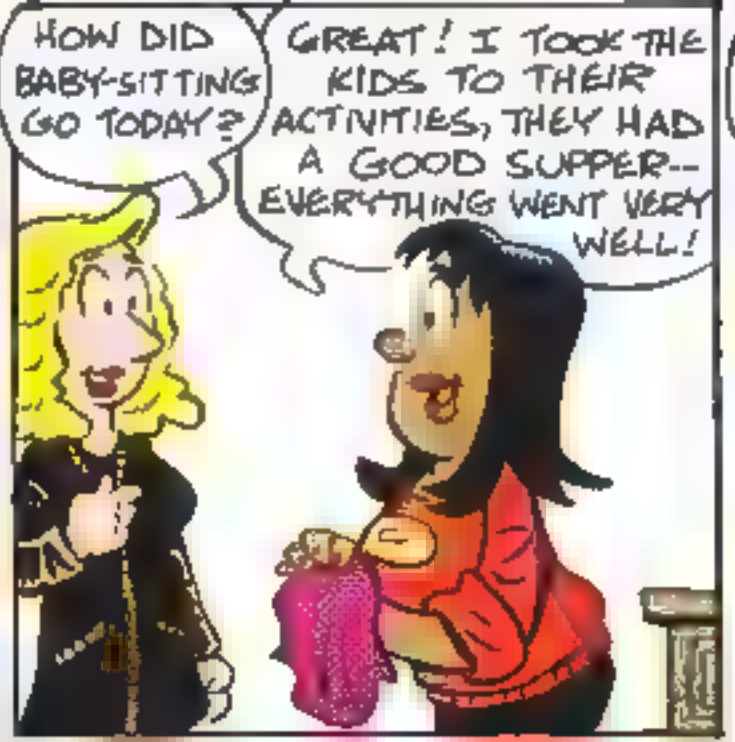
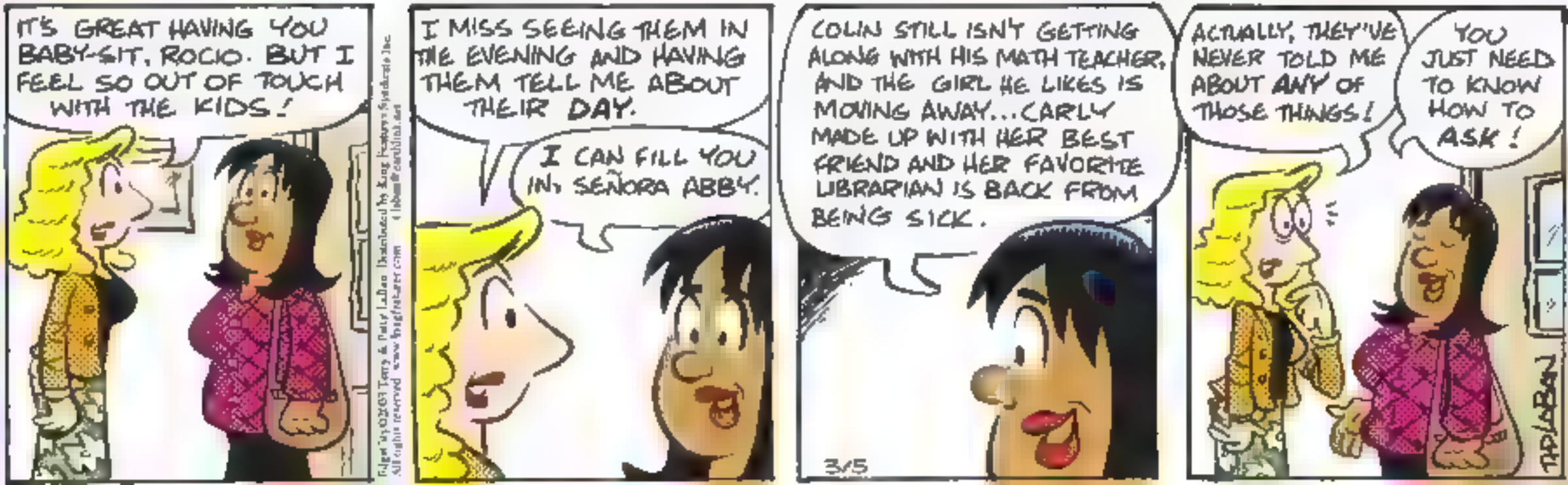



YOU'VE HAD A LOT OF CLIENTS LATELY, ABBY.
BUSINESS HAS BEEN BOOMING! WE'VE HIRED A BABY SITTER 4 NIGHTS A WEEK TO TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS.
THAT MUST HELP.
YEAH. BUT NOW I DON'T SEE THEM TILL PAST BEDTIME DURING THE WEEK!
3/3
I USED TO WORRY I WAS NEGLECTING MY WORK. NOW I WORRY I'M NEGLECTING MY KIDS...
TERRY LABAN
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO BALANCE IT ALL!
YOU COULD NEGLECT BOTH.

HELLO, ROCIO!
BUENAS NOCHES, SEÑORA ABBY!

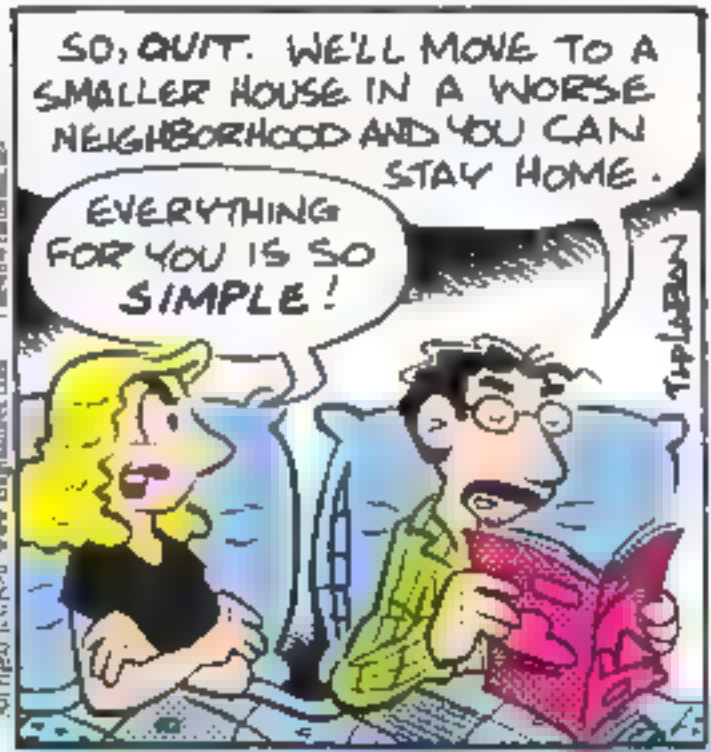

HOW DID BABY-SITTING GO TODAY?
GREAT! I TOOK THE KIDS TO THEIR ACTIVITIES, THEY HAD A GOOD SUPPER-- EVERYTHING WENT VERY WELL!

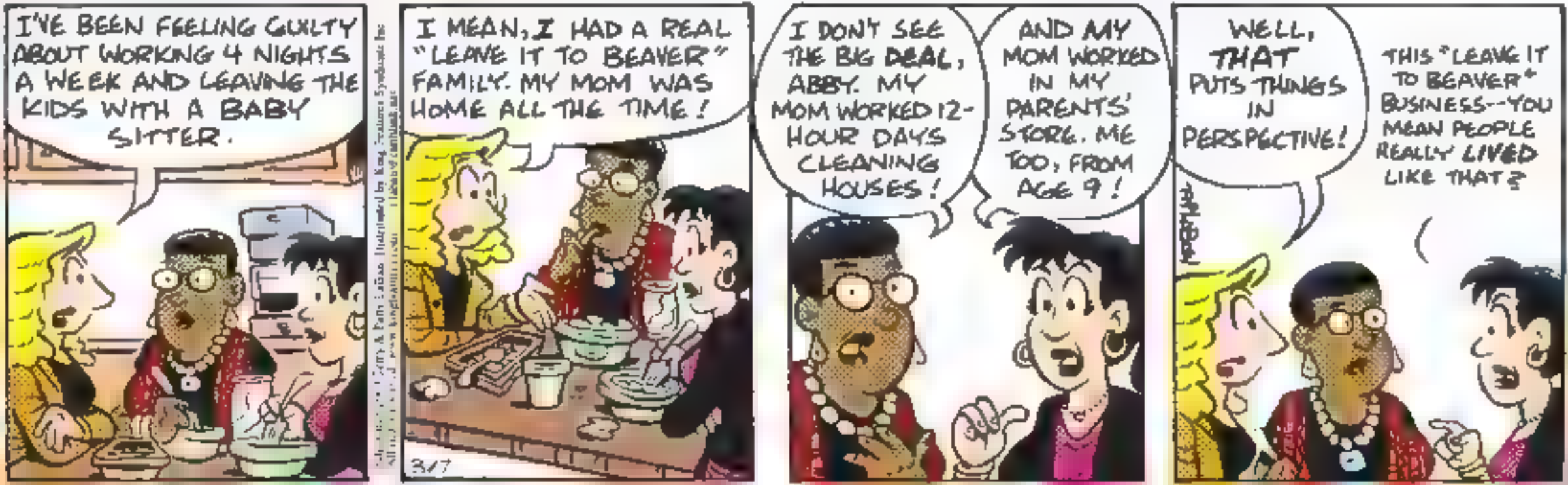
IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THEY MISSED ME TOO MUCH!
OH NO, SEÑORA ABBY! NOT AT ALL!
PAT PAT!
3/14


IT'S GREAT HAVING YOU BABY-SIT, ROCIO. BUT I FEEL SO OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE KIDS!
I MISS SEEING THEM IN THE EVENING AND HAVING THEM TELL ME ABOUT THEIR DAY.
I CAN FILL YOU IN, SEÑORA ABBY.
COLIN STILL ISN'T GETTING ALONG WITH HIS MATH TEACHER, AND THE GIRL HE LIKES IS MOVING AWAY...CARLY MADE UP WITH HER BEST FRIEND AND HER FAVORITE LIBRARIAN IS BACK FROM BEING SICK.
3/5
ACTUALLY, THEY'VE NEVER TOLD ME ABOUT ANY OF THOSE THINGS!
YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW HOW TO ASK!
TAPLABAN

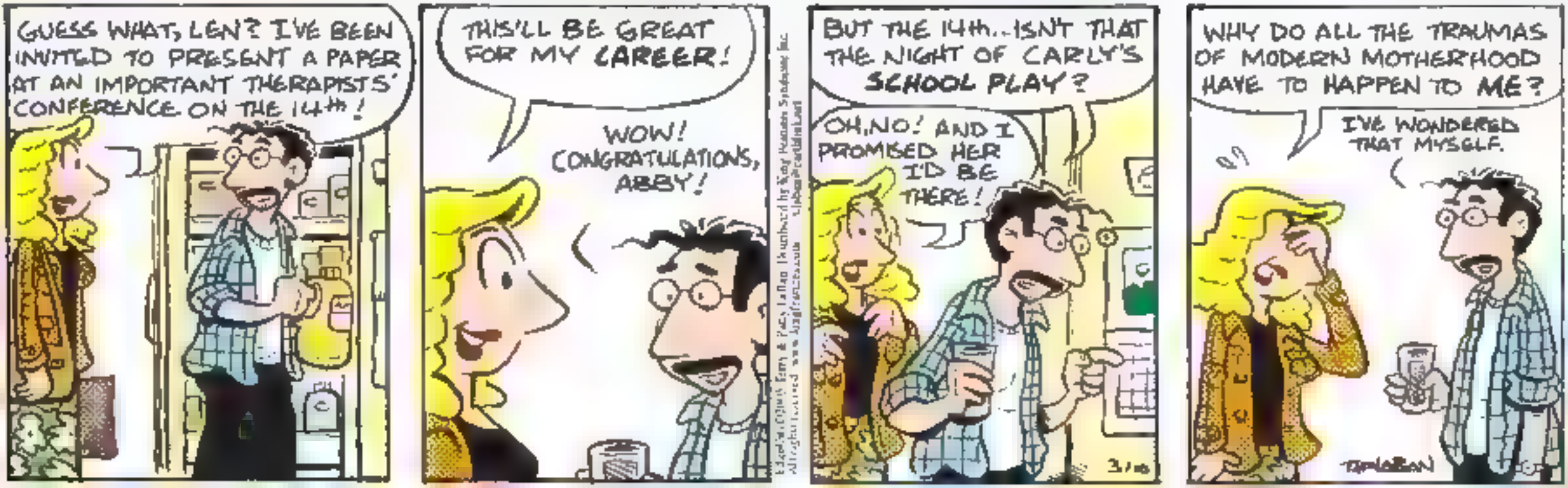
I DEFINITELY NEED TO WORK 4 NIGHTS A WEEK. BUT I'M WORRIED THE KIDS ARE SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME WITH THE BABY SITTER!
C'MON, ABBY-- IT'S BETTER THAN MAKING YOURSELF MISERABLE TRYING TO BE "SUPERMOM".

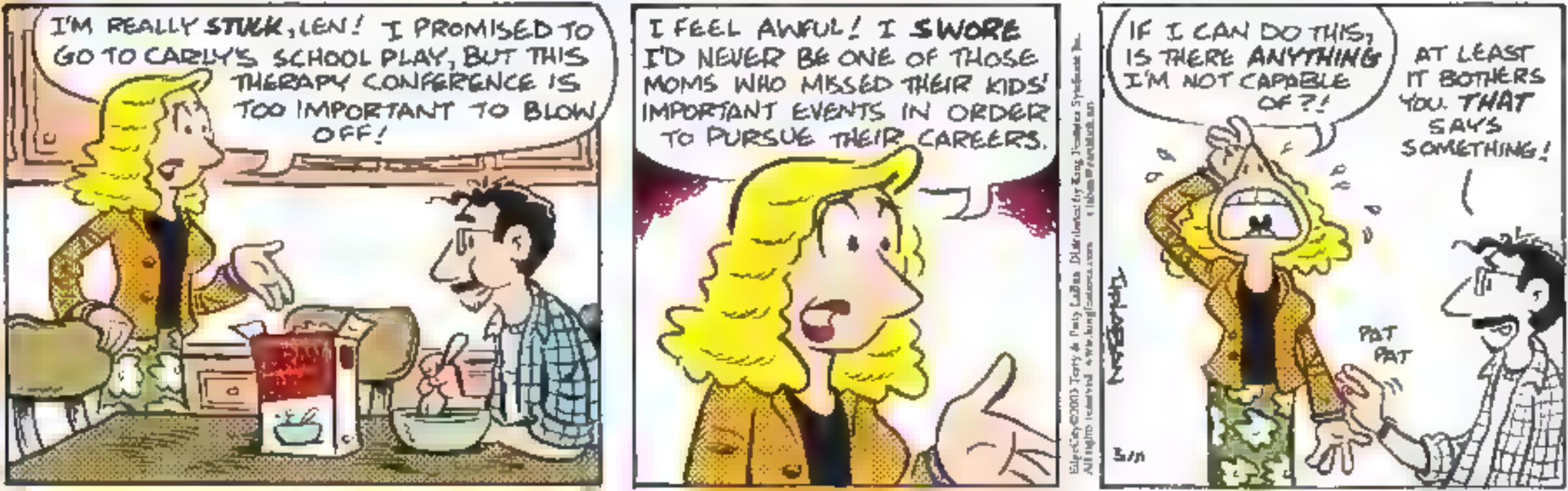
IS IT? I FEEL LIKE I HARDLY SEE THEM ANYMORE! IS HAVING A CAREER WORTH MISSING OUT ON SO MUCH OF THEIR LIVES?

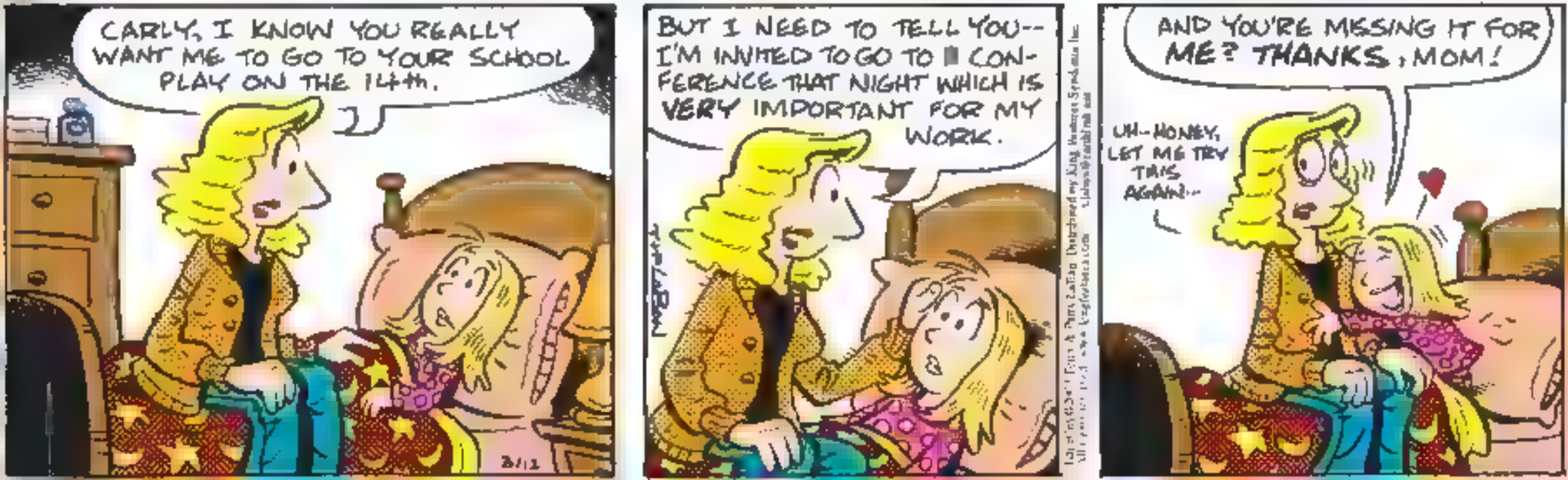

SO, QUIT. WE'LL MOVE TO A SMALLER HOUSE IN A WORSE NEIGHBORHOOD AND YOU CAN STAY HOME.
EVERYTHING FOR YOU IS SO SIMPLE!

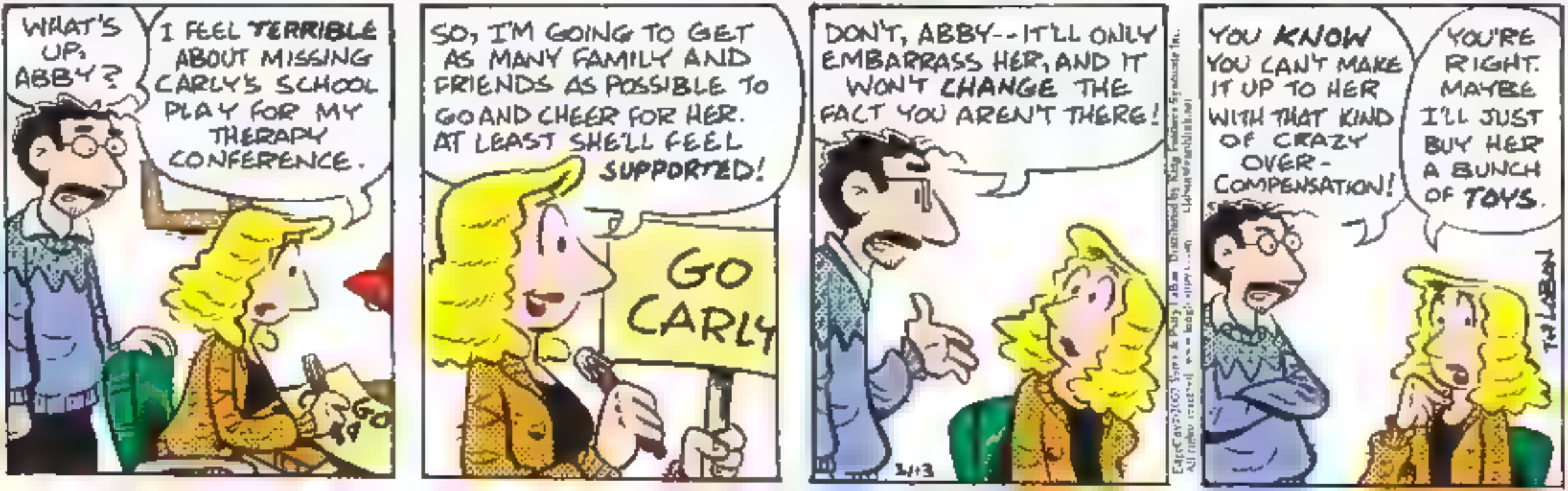

I'VE BEEN FEELING GUILTY ABOUT WORKING 4 NIGHTS A WEEK AND LEAVING THE KIDS WITH A BABY SITTER.
I MEAN, I HAD A REAL "LEAVE IT TO BEAVER" FAMILY. MY MOM WAS HOME ALL THE TIME!
3/7
I DON'T SEE THE BIG DEAL, ABBY. MY MOM WORKED 12-HOUR DAYS CLEANING HOUSES!
AND MY MOM WORKED IN MY PARENTS' STORE. ME TOO, FROM AGE 9!
WELL, THAT PUTS THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE!
THIS "LEAVE IT TO BEAVER" BUSINESS--YOU MEAN PEOPLE REALLY LIVED LIKE THAT?

THINGS ARE GOING PRETTY WELL, MOM. BUT I'VE BEEN WORKING A LOT, AND FEELING KIND OF GUILTY ABOUT IT!
GUILTY? HOW COME?
THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT THINKS I OUGHT TO BE HOME MORE WITH THE KIDS—LIKE YOU WERE!
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING!
LISTEN, IF I COULD HAVE LEFT YOU AND YOUR SISTER WITH A SITTER AND GONE TO WORK, I WOULD'VE DONE IT IN A MINUTE!
3/8
WAS IT HELPFUL TO TALK TO YOUR MOM?
NOT REALLY.


GUESS WHAT, LEN? I'VE BEEN INVITED TO PRESENT A PAPER AT AN IMPORTANT THERAPISTS' CONFERENCE ON THE 14th!
THIS'LL BE GREAT FOR MY CAREER!
WOW! CONGRATULATIONS, ABBY!
BUT THE 14th...ISN'T THAT THE NIGHT OF CARLY'S SCHOOL PLAY?
OH, NO! AND I PROMISED HER I'D BE THERE!
WHY DO ALL THE TRAUMAS OF MODERN MOTHERHOOD HAVE TO HAPPEN TO ME?
I'VE WONDERED THAT MYSELF.


I'M REALLY STUCK, LEN! I PROMISED TO GO TO CARLY'S SCHOOL PLAY, BUT THIS THERAPY CONFERENCE IS TOO IMPORTANT TO BLOW OFF!
I FEEL AWFUL! I SWORE I'D NEVER BE ONE OF THOSE MOMS WHO MISSED THEIR KIDS' IMPORTANT EVENTS IN ORDER TO PURSUE THEIR CAREERS.
IF I CAN DO THIS, IS THERE ANYTHING I'M NOT CAPABLE OF?!
AT LEAST IT BOTHERS YOU. THAT SAYS SOMETHING!
PAT PAT


CARLY, I KNOW YOU REALLY WANT ME TO GO TO YOUR SCHOOL PLAY ON THE 14th.
BUT I NEED TO TELL YOU-- I'M INVITED TO GO TO A CONFERENCE THAT NIGHT WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR MY WORK.
AND YOU'RE MISSING IT FOR ME? THANKS, MOM!
UH-- HONEY, LET ME TRY THIS AGAIN--

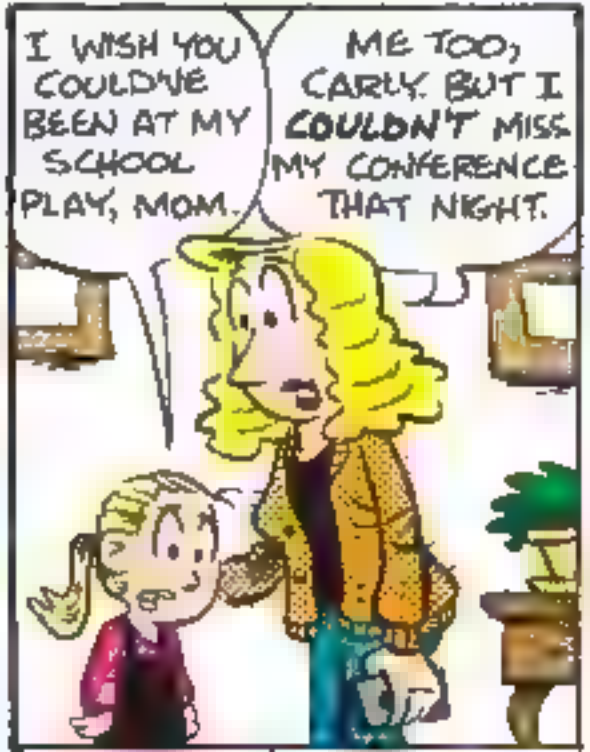

WHAT'S UP, ABBY?
I FEEL TERRIBLE ABOUT MISSING CARLY'S SCHOOL PLAY FOR MY THERAPY CONFERENCE.
SO, I'M GOING TO GET AS MANY FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS POSSIBLE TO GO AND CHEER FOR HER. AT LEAST SHE'LL FEEL SUPPORTED!
GO CARLY
DON'T, ABBY--IT'LL ONLY EMBARRASS HER, AND IT WON'T CHANGE THE FACT YOU AREN'T THERE!
YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T MAKE IT UP TO HER WITH THAT KIND OF CRAZY OVER-COMPENSATION!
YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE I'LL JUST BUY HER A BUNCH OF TOYS.

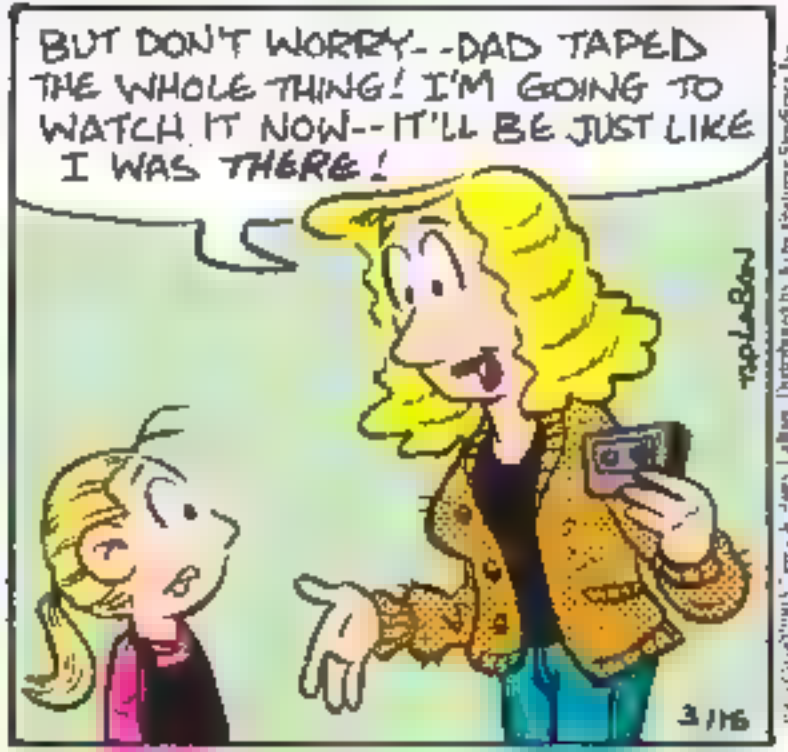
ABBY, THIS IS DR. MIKE WERNER.
I ENJOYED YOUR PRESENTATION, DR. ARDIN.
THERAPY CONFERENCE

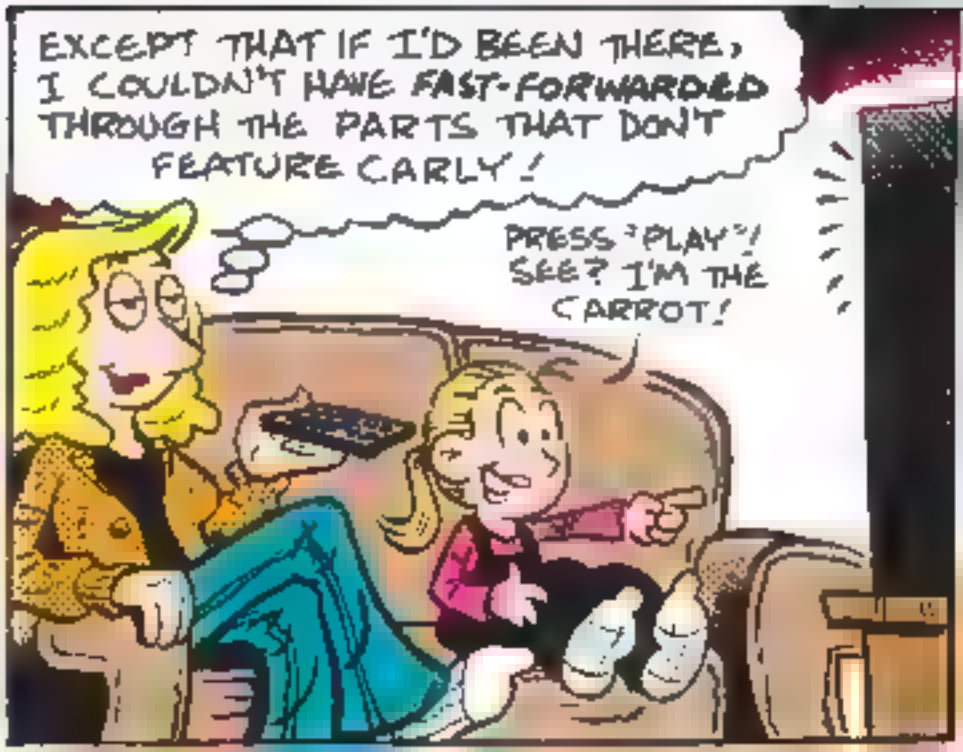
AND THIS IS DR. GITA JAMAAL.
VERY NICE TALK.
THANKS A LOT!

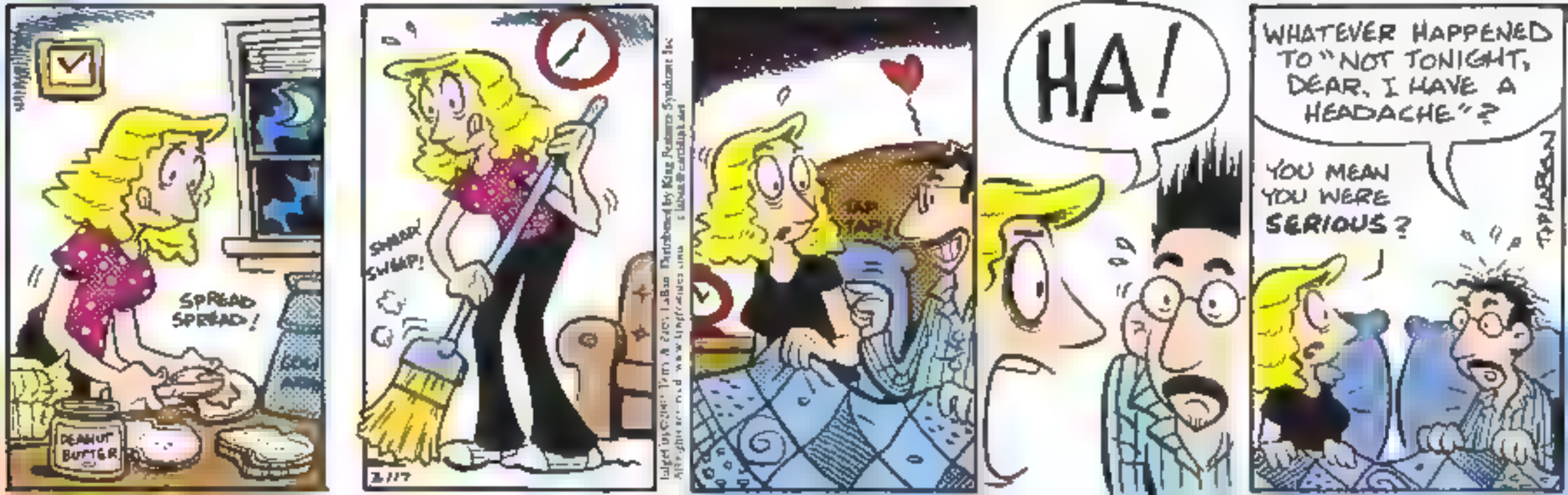
AND HERE'S YOUR DAUGHTER, CARLY.
MY SCHOOL PLAY IS TONIGHT AND YOU'RE NOT THERE!

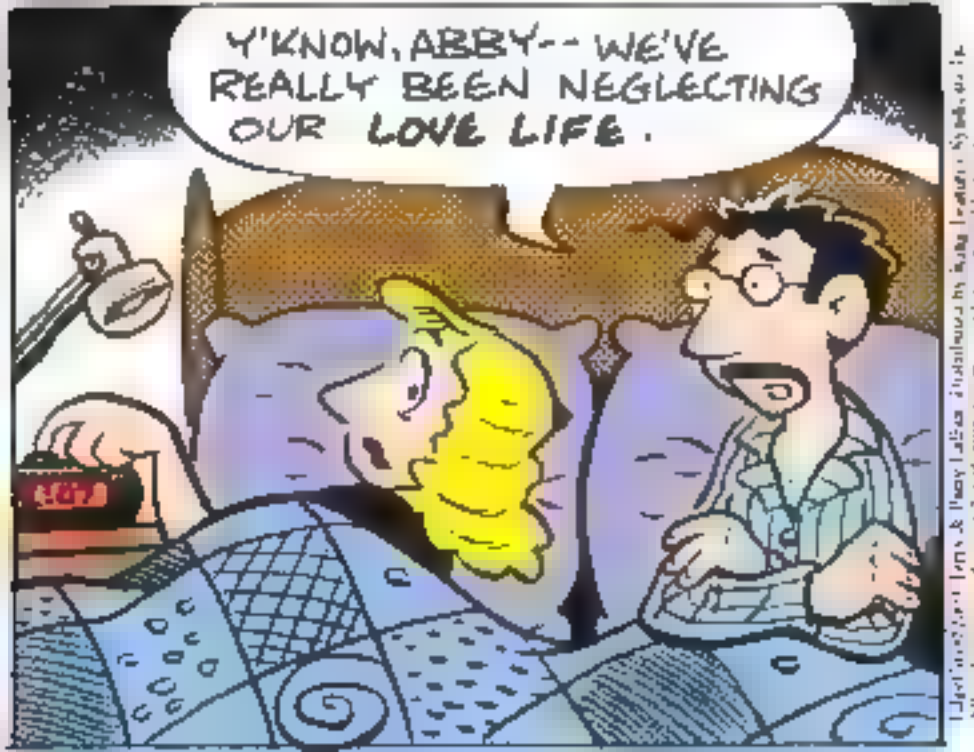
CAN'T I HAVE A MOMENT OF TRIUMPH WITHOUT A GUILT-INDUCED FANTASY?
WHAT IS IT? IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE STUFFED MUSHROOMS?
3/14


I WISH YOU COULDN'E BEEN AT MY SCHOOL PLAY, MOM.
ME TOO, CARLY. BUT I COULDN'T MISS MY CONFERENCE THAT NIGHT.

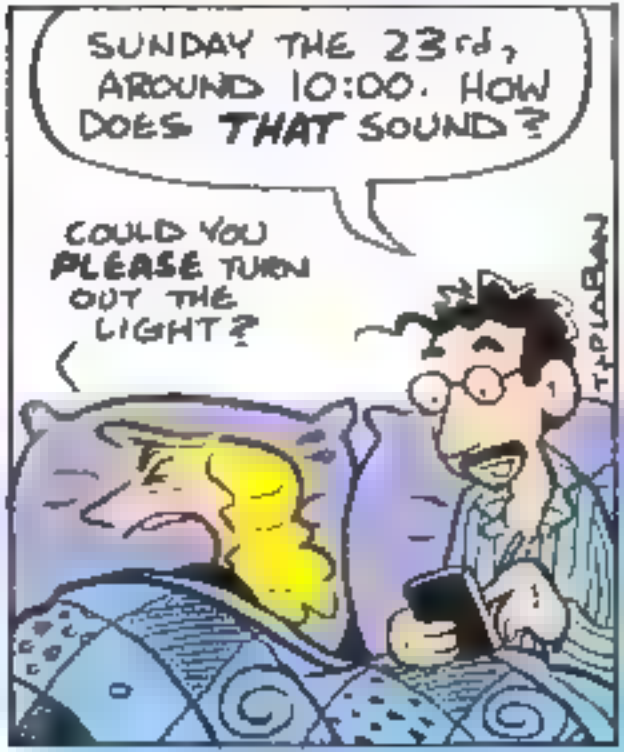

BUT DON'T WORRY--DAD TAPED THE WHOLE THING! I'M GOING TO WATCH IT NOW--IT'LL BE JUST LIKE I WAS THERE!
3/16

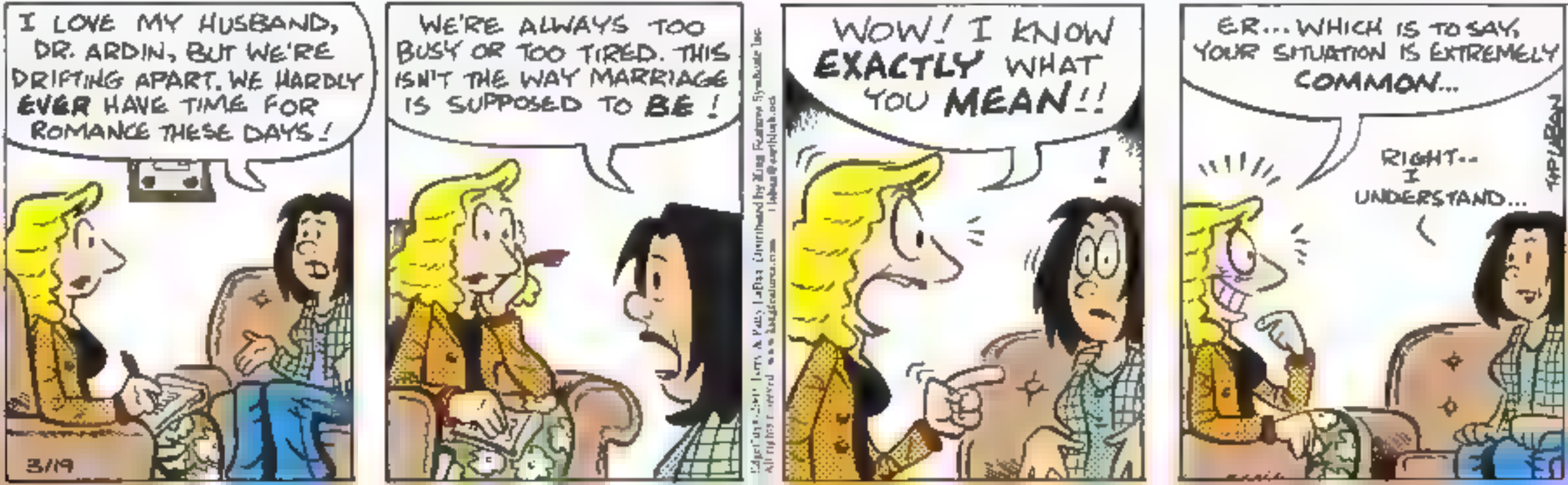

EXCEPT THAT IF I'D BEEN THERE, I COULDN'T HAVE FAST-FORWARDED THROUGH THE PARTS THAT DON'T FEATURE CARLY!
PRESS "PLAY"! SEE? I'M THE CARROT!

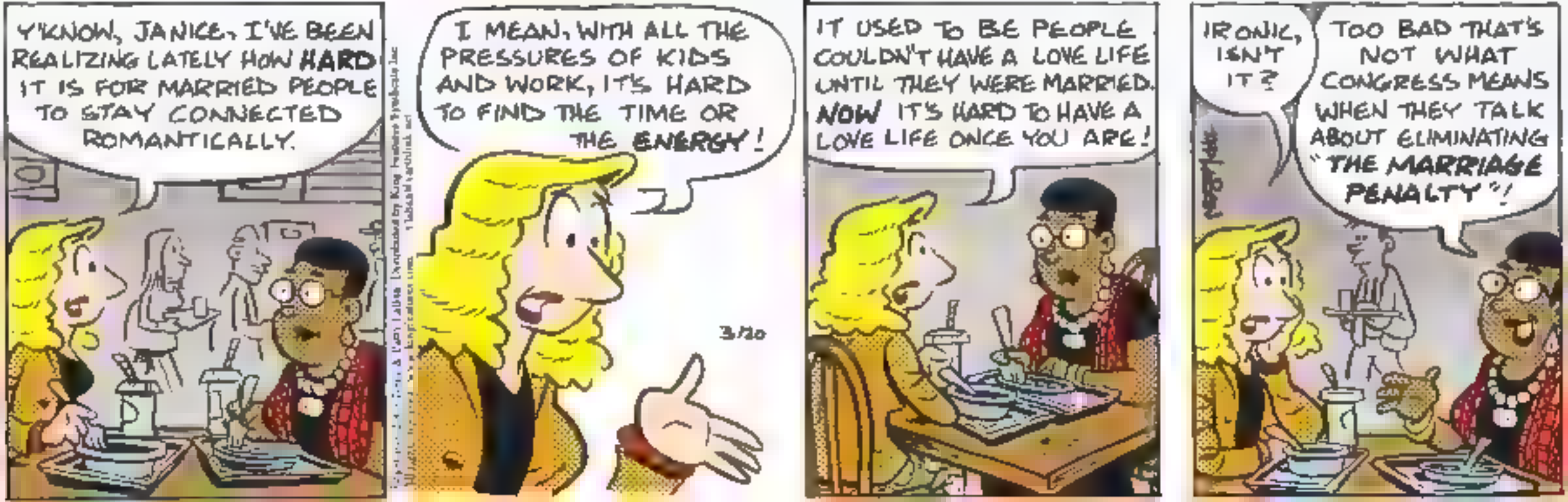

SPREAD SPREAD!
PEANUT BUTTER
SWEEP SWEEP!
TAP TAP!
HA!
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "NOT TONIGHT, DEAR, I HAVE A HEADACHE"?
YOU MEAN YOU WERE SERIOUS?
TOP LABAN

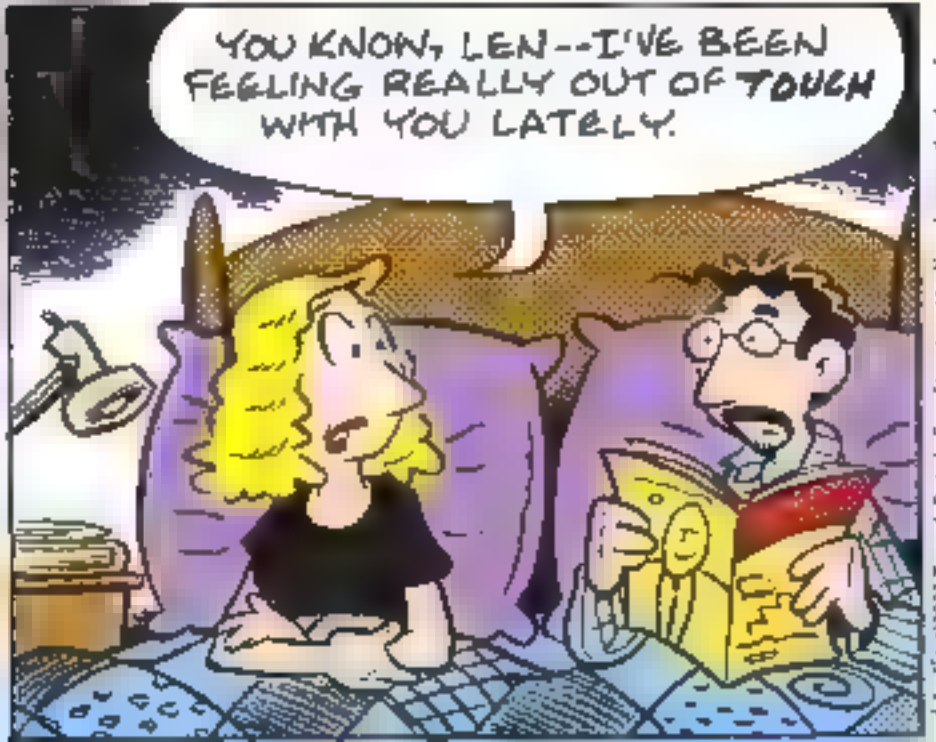

Y'KNOW, ABBY-- WE'VE REALLY BEEN NEGLECTING OUR LOVE LIFE.

I'M SORRY, LEN. BUT ALL DAY LONG I'VE BEEN COUNSELING CLIENTS, TAKING CARE OF THE KIDS, RUNNING ERRANDS AND DOING HOUSEWORK! ALL I WANT TO DO NOW IS SLEEP!
I UNDER-STAND.


SUNDAY THE 23rd, AROUND 10:00. HOW DOES THAT SOUND?
COULD YOU PLEASE TURN OUT THE LIGHT?

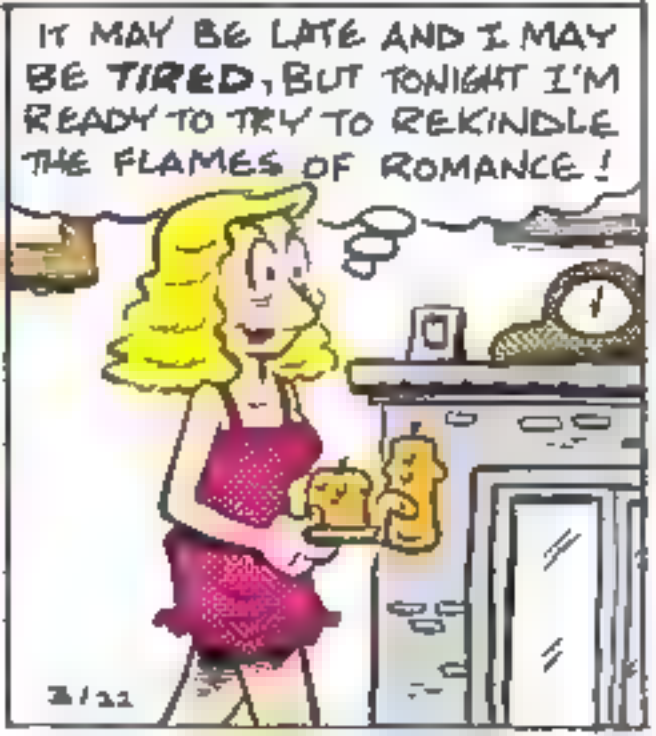

I LOVE MY HUSBAND, DR. ARDIN, BUT WE'RE DRIFTING APART. WE HARDLY EVER HAVE TIME FOR ROMANCE THESE DAYS!
3/19
WE'RE ALWAYS TOO BUSY OR TOO TIRED. THIS ISN'T THE WAY MARRIAGE IS SUPPOSED TO BE!
WOW! I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN!!
!
ER... WHICH IS TO SAY, YOUR SITUATION IS EXTREMELY COMMON...
RIGHT-- I UNDERSTAND...


Y'KNOW, JANICE, I'VE BEEN REALIZING LATELY HOW HARD IT IS FOR MARRIED PEOPLE TO STAY CONNECTED ROMANTICALLY.
I MEAN, WITH ALL THE PRESSURES OF KIDS AND WORK, IT'S HARD TO FIND THE TIME OR THE ENERGY!
3/10
IT USED TO BE PEOPLE COULDN'T HAVE A LOVE LIFE UNTIL THEY WERE MARRIED. NOW IT'S HARD TO HAVE A LOVE LIFE ONCE YOU ARE!
IRONIC, ISN'T IT?
TOO BAD THAT'S NOT WHAT CONGRESS MEANS WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT ELIMINATING "THE MARRIAGE PENALTY"!

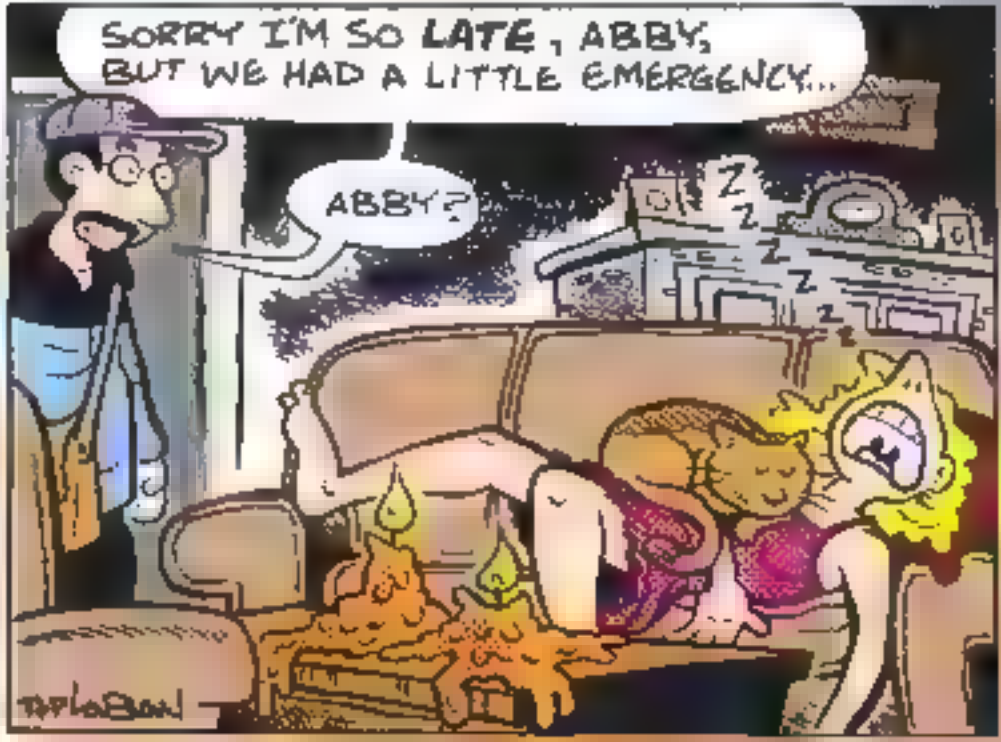

YOU KNOW, LEN--I'VE BEEN FEELING REALLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH YOU LATELY.

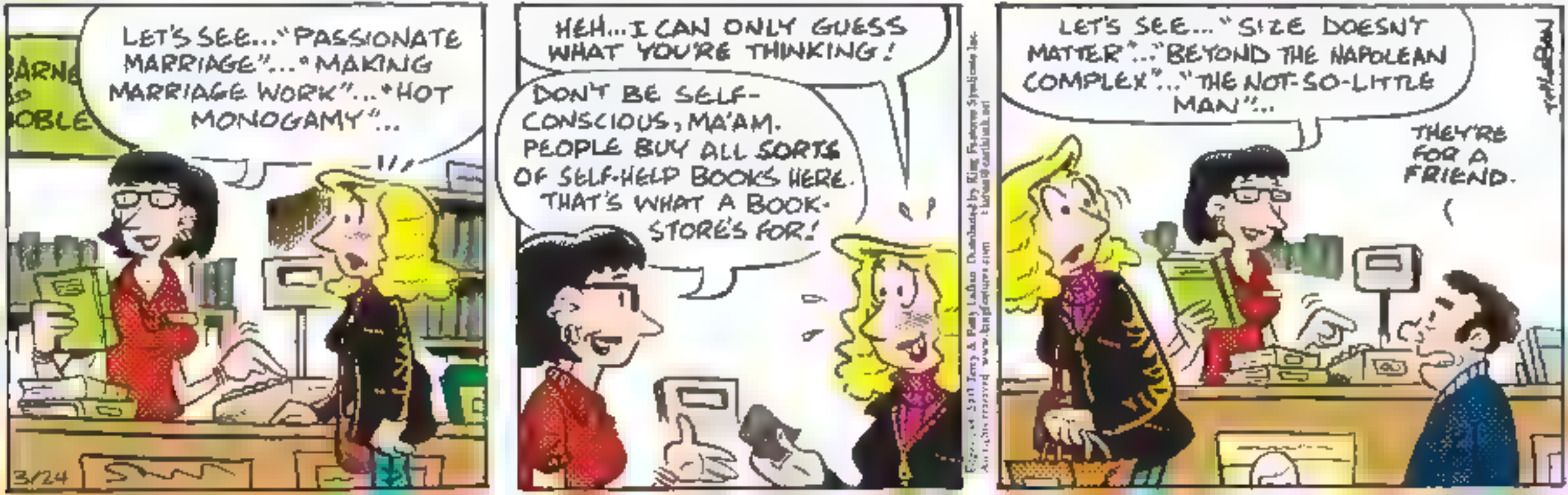
IT'S BEEN HARD TO FIND TIME TO SPEND TOGETHER AS A COUPLE. IT'S LIKE WE'RE JUST GOOD FRIENDS WHO HELP EACH OTHER TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS.

SO... WE ARE STILL GOOD FRIENDS?
WOW! IT'S WORSE THAN I THOUGHT!

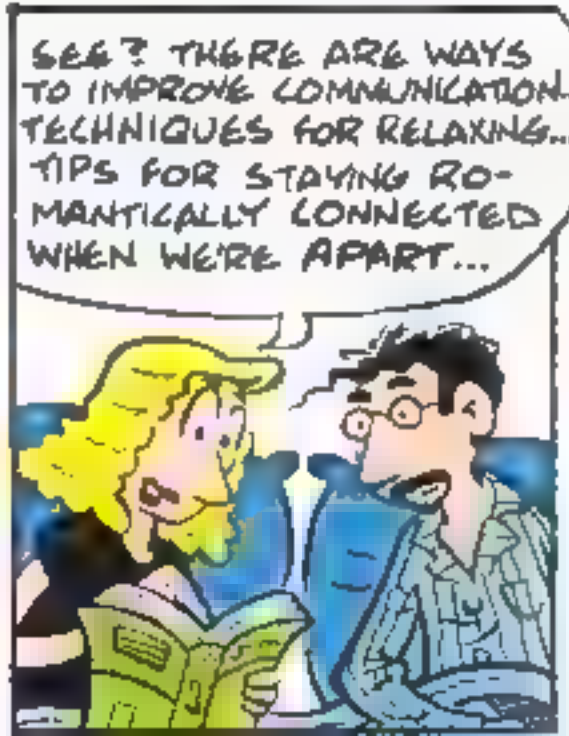

IT MAY BE LATE AND I MAY BE TIRED, BUT TONIGHT I'M READY TO TRY TO REKINDLE THE FLAMES OF ROMANCE!
3/22

I'LL LIGHT SOME CANDLES AND WAIT HERE IN SOMETHING ATTRACTIVE TO SURPRISE LEN WHEN HE GETS HOME!


SORRY I'M SO LATE, ABBY, BUT WE HAD A LITTLE EMERGENCY...
ABBY?
Z Z Z Z


LET'S SEE..."PASSIONATE MARRIAGE"..."MAKING MARRIAGE WORK"..."HOT MONOGAMY"...
3/24
HEH...I CAN ONLY GUESS WHAT YOU'RE THINKING!
DON'T BE SELF-CONSCIOUS, MA'AM. PEOPLE BUY ALL SORTS OF SELF-HELP BOOKS HERE. THAT'S WHAT A BOOK-STORE'S FOR!
LET'S SEE..."SIZE DOESN'T MATTER"..."BEYOND THE NAPOLEAN COMPLEX"..."THE NOT-SO-LITTLE MAN"...
THEY'RE FOR A FRIEND.

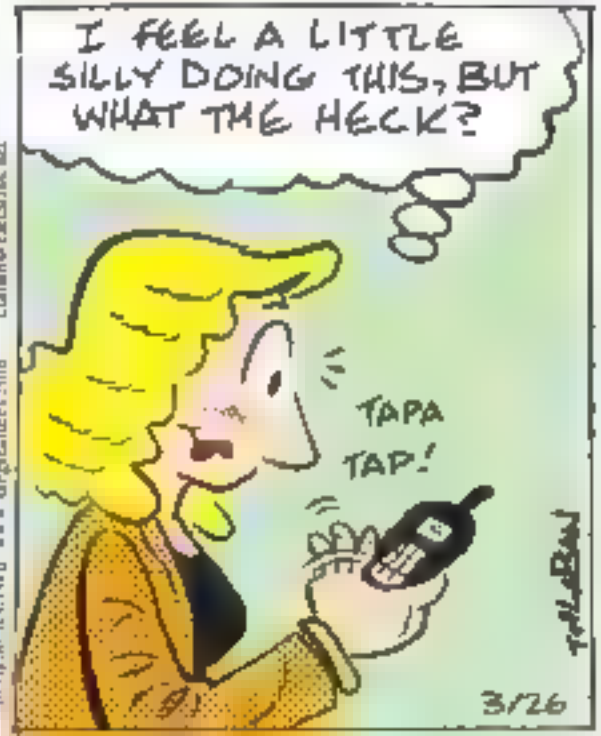
I WENT TO THE BOOK-STORE TODAY, LEN, AND FOUND A BUNCH OF BOOKS ON HOW MARRIED PEOPLE CAN SPICE UP THEIR LOVE LIVES!


SEE? THERE ARE WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION... TECHNIQUES FOR RELAXING... TIPS FOR STAYING RO-MANTICALLY CONNECTED WHEN WE'RE APART...

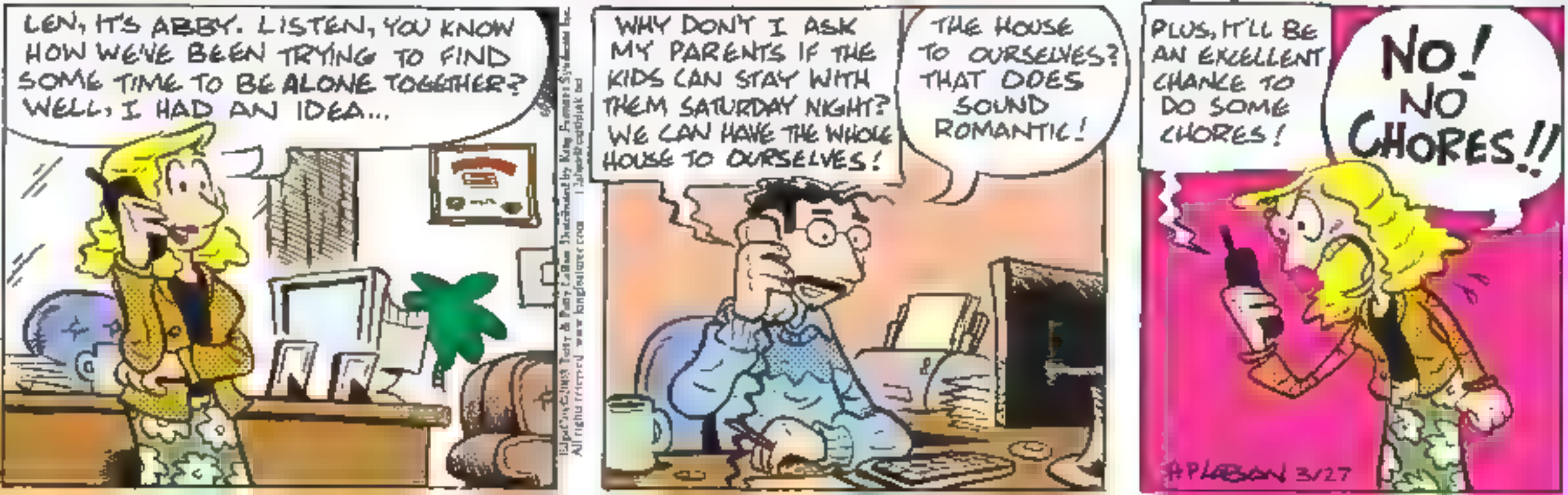
THAT'S GREAT, ABBY. BUT IF YOU REALLY WANT TO SPICE UP OUR LOVE LIFE, I THINK YOU SHOULD PUT DOWN THE BOOK!

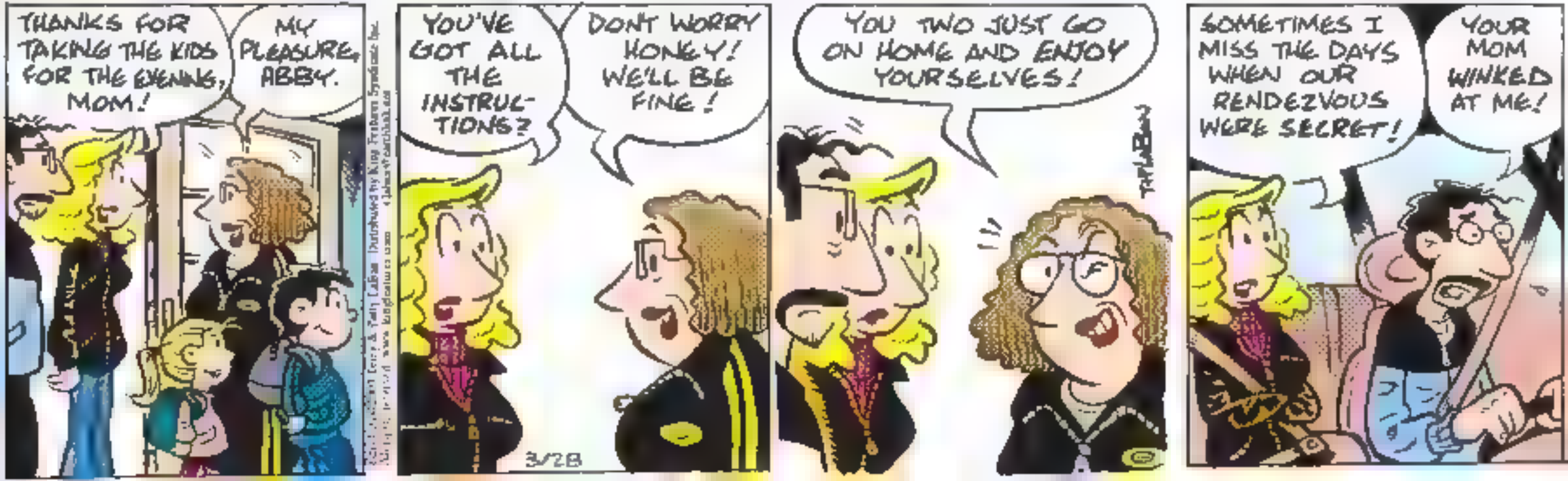
ABBY?
NOT NOW! THIS IS INTERESTING!

ONE OF THE BOOKS I GOT ON KEEPING PASSION IN YOUR MARRIAGE SUGGESTS SENDING YOUR HUSBAND SUGGESTIVE TEXT MESSAGES DURING THE DAY.


I FEEL A LITTLE SILLY DOING THIS, BUT WHAT THE HECK?
TAPA TAP!
3/26

THANKS FOR TAKING MY PAGER WHILE I WAS OUT, RAJIV. DID I GET ANY MESSAGES?
NOT THE ONES YOU ASKED ME TO WATCH FOR!

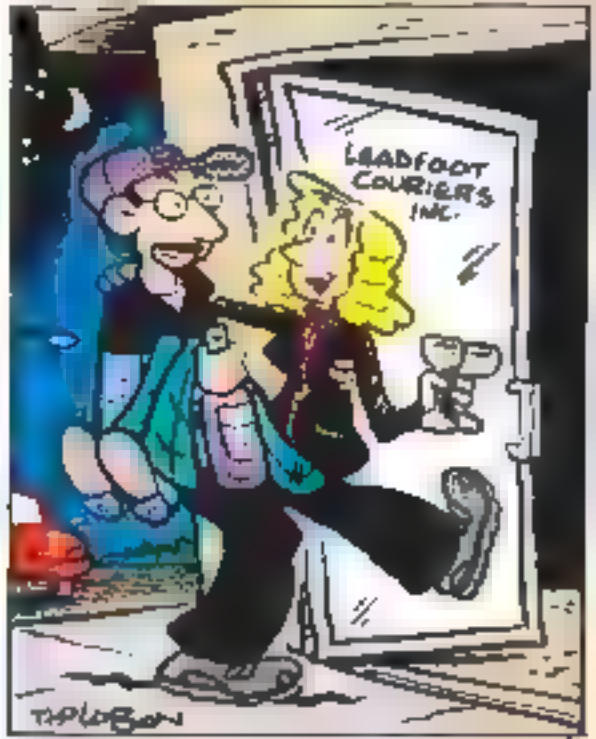

LEN, IT'S ABBY. LISTEN, YOU KNOW HOW WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND SOME TIME TO BE ALONE TOGETHER? WELL, I HAD AN IDEA...
WHY DON'T I ASK MY PARENTS IF THE KIDS CAN STAY WITH THEM SATURDAY NIGHT? WE CAN HAVE THE WHOLE HOUSE TO OURSELVES!
THE HOUSE TO OURSELVES? THAT DOES SOUND ROMANTIC!
PLUS, IT'LL BE AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO DO SOME CHORES!
NO! NO CHORES!!
APLARSON 3/27

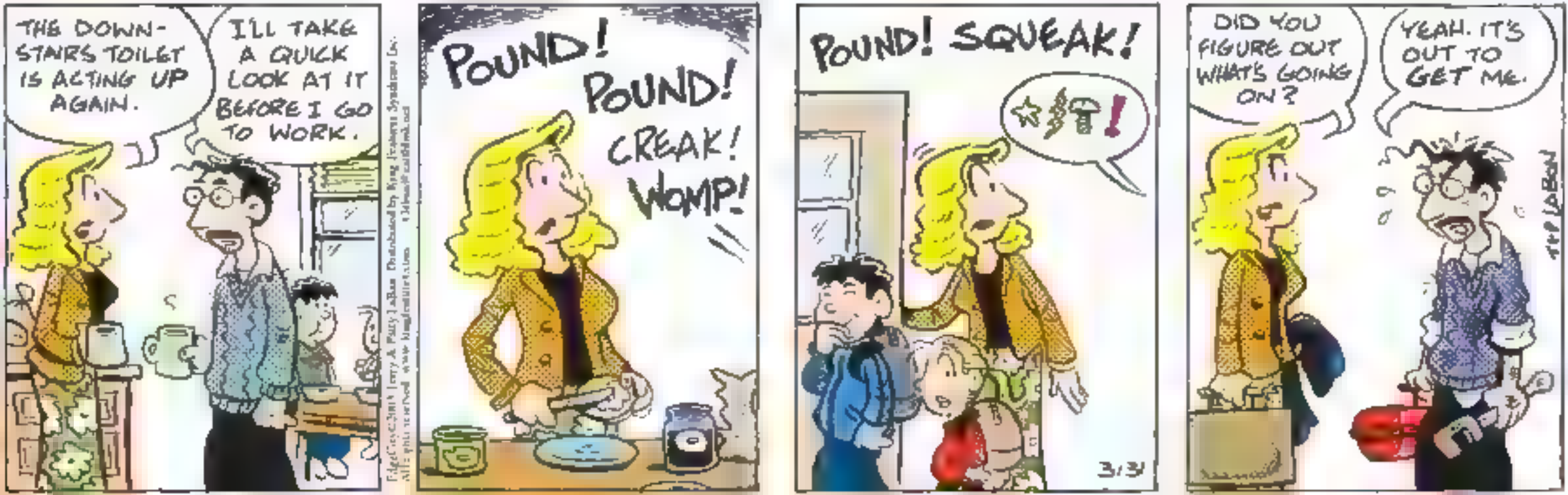

THANKS FOR TAKING THE KIDS FOR THE EVENING, MOM!
MY PLEASURE, ABBY.
YOU'VE GOT ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS?
DONT WORRY HONEY! WE'LL BE FINE!
3/28
YOU TWO JUST GO ON HOME AND ENJOY YOURSELVES!
SOMETIMES I MISS THE DAYS WHEN OUR RENDEZVOUS WERE SECRET!
YOUR MOM WINKED AT ME!

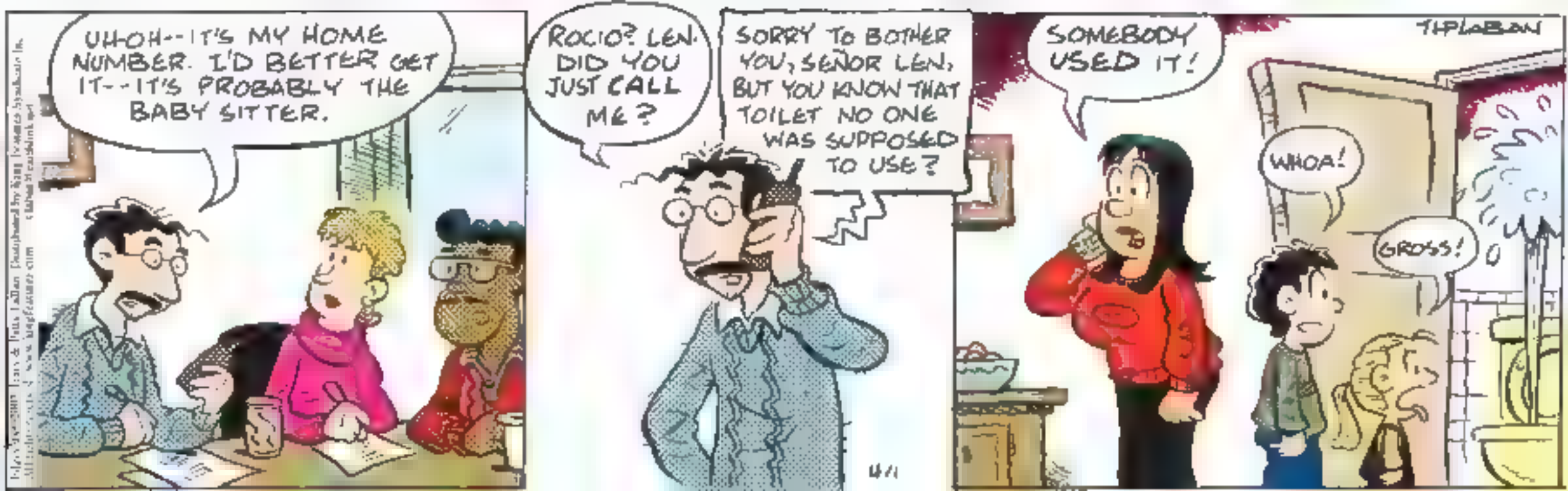
IT'S BEEN HARD TO FIND TIME IN OUR SCHEDULES, BUT FINALLY WE HAVE A WHOLE EVENING IN THE HOUSE TOGETHER--ALONE!
UH-OH!
RIIING!

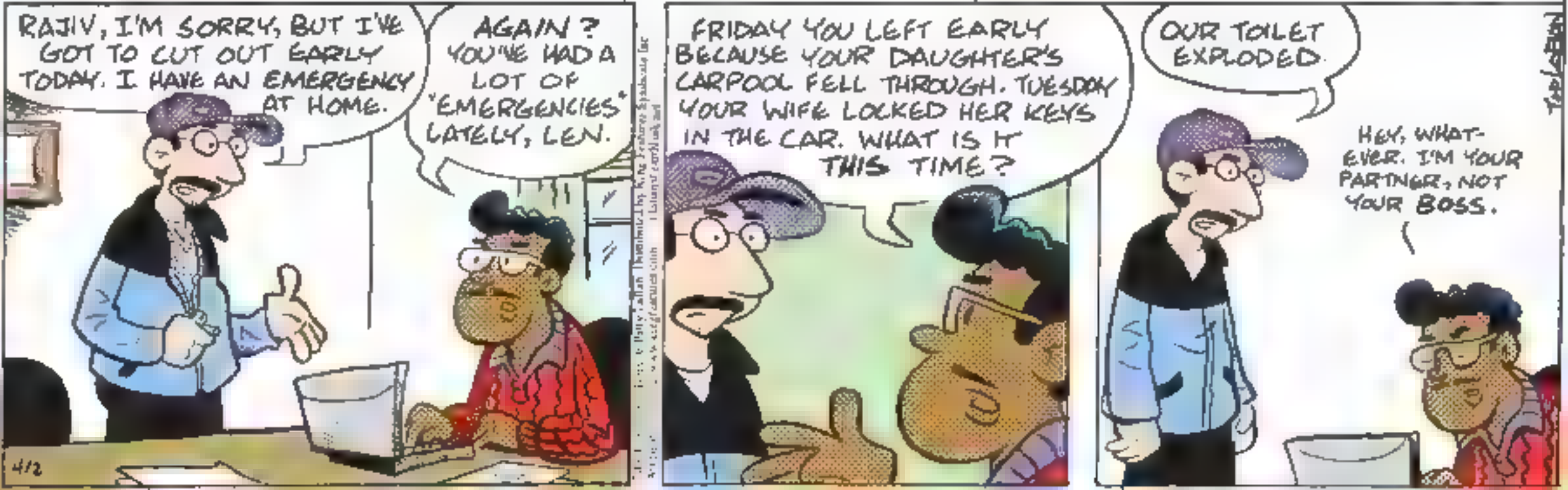
OH NO, ABBY--IT'S RAJIV! I'VE GOT TO GO TO THE OFFICE RIGHT NOW AND PICK SOMETHING UP!
NOW? OH, LEN!

IT STINKS, BUT I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE! THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND!
NO ONE, HUH?


LEADFOOT COURIERS INC.

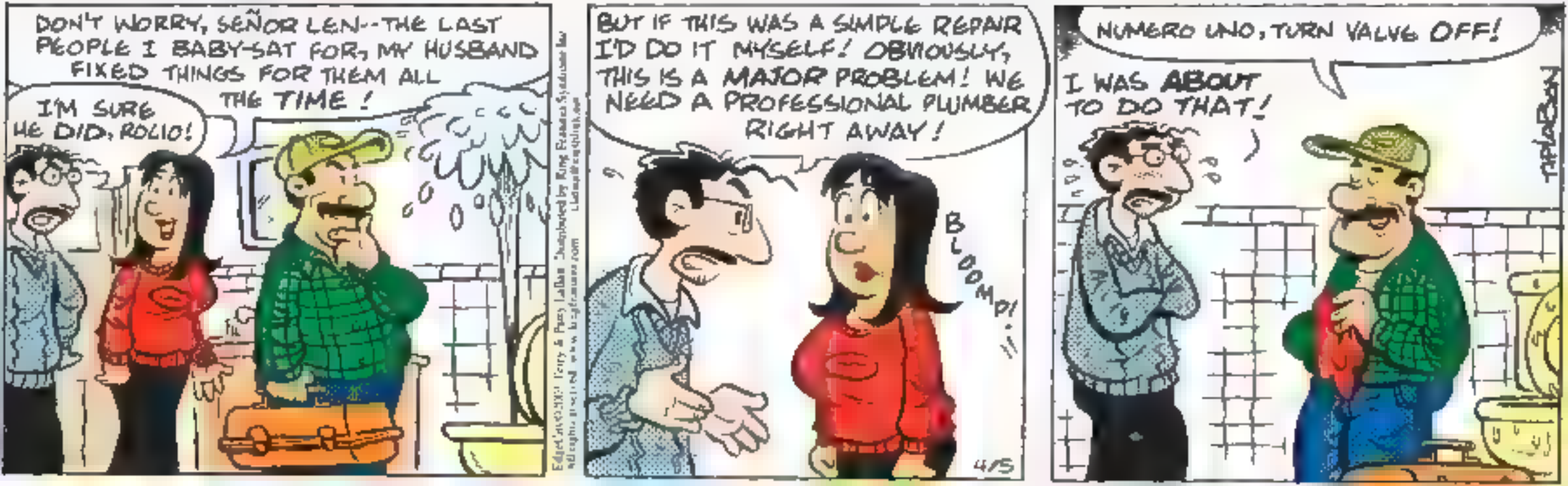

THE DOWN-STAIRS TOILET IS ACTING UP AGAIN.
I'LL TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT IT BEFORE I GO TO WORK.
POUND! POUND! CREAK! WOMP!
POUND! SQUEAK!
3/31
DID YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON?
YEAH. IT'S OUT TO GET ME.

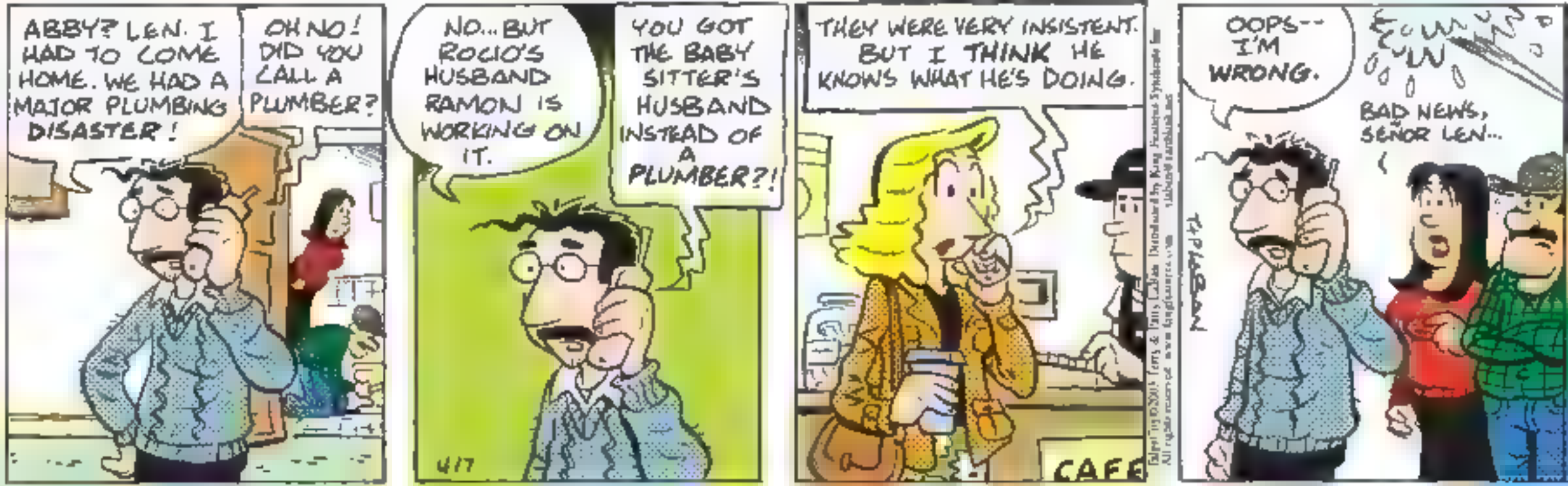

UH-OH--IT'S MY HOME NUMBER. I'D BETTER GET IT--IT'S PROBABLY THE BABY SITTER.
ROCIO? LEN. DID YOU JUST CALL ME?
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, SEÑOR LEN, BUT YOU KNOW THAT TOILET NO ONE WAS SUPPOSED TO USE?
SOMEBODY USED IT!
WHOA!
GROSS!
TIPLADAN

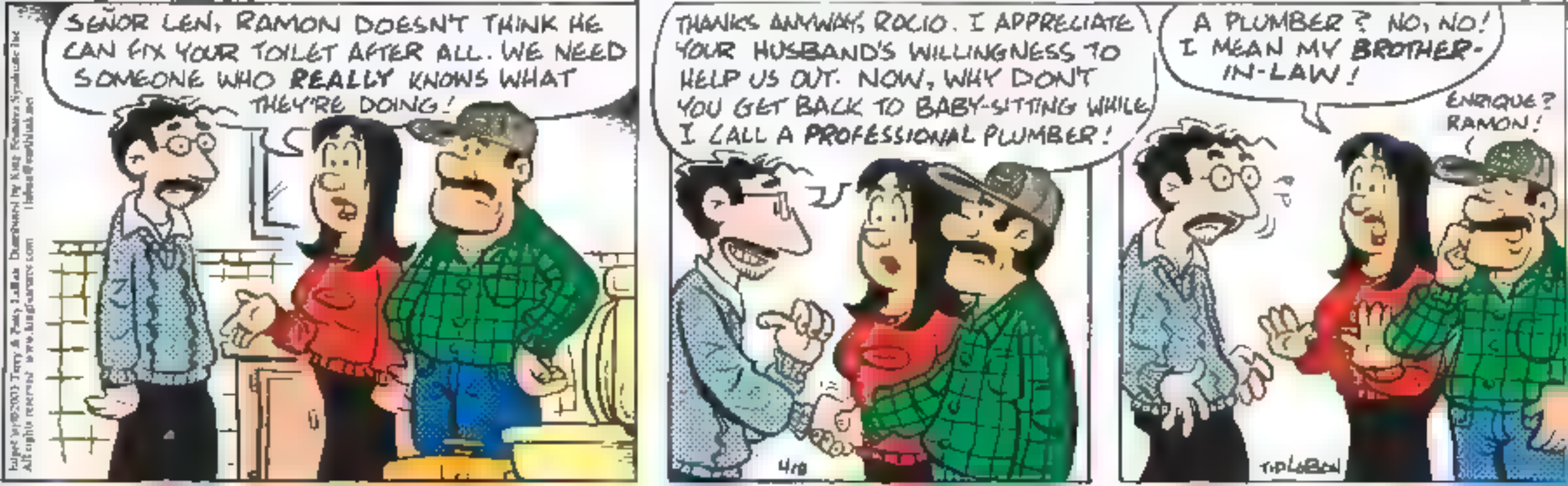

RAJIV, I'M SORRY, BUT I'VE GOT TO CUT OUT EARLY TODAY. I HAVE AN EMERGENCY AT HOME.
AGAIN? YOU'VE HAD A LOT OF "EMERGENCIES" LATELY, LEN.
412
FRIDAY YOU LEFT EARLY BECAUSE YOUR DAUGHTER'S CARPOOL FELL THROUGH. TUESDAY YOUR WIFE LOCKED HER KEYS IN THE CAR. WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?
OUR TOILET EXPLODED.
HEY, WHATEVER. I'M YOUR PARTNER, NOT YOUR BOSS.

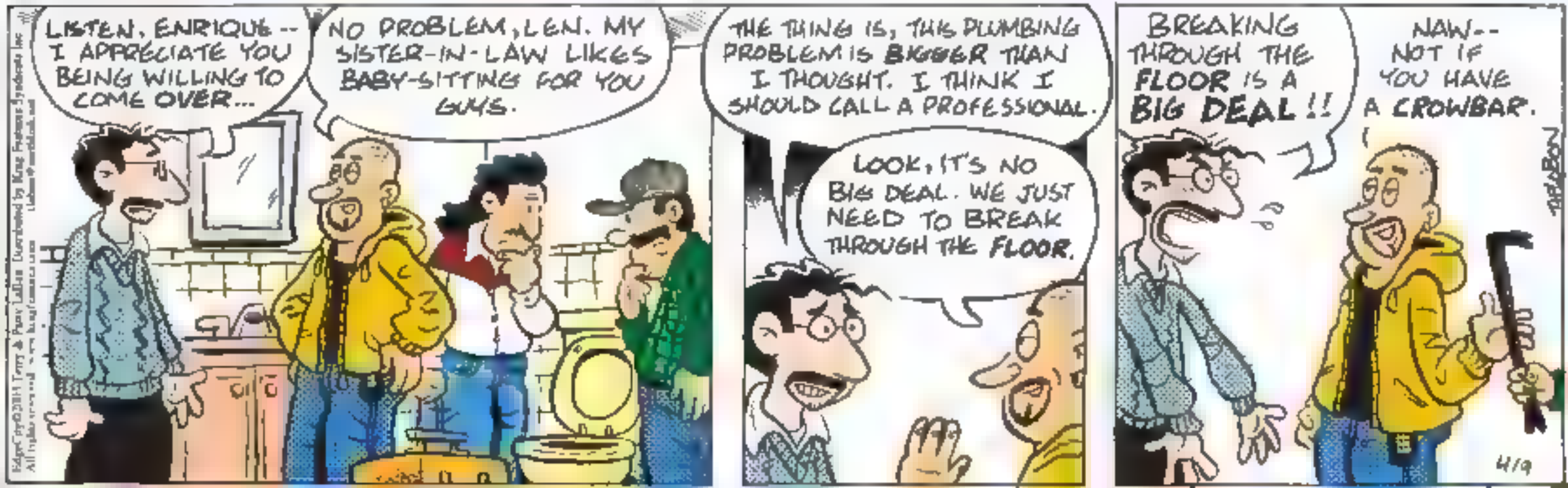
I CAME HOME AS SOON AS I COULD, ROCIO. SORRY THIS HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE BABY-SITTING!
NEVER MIND, SEÑOR LEN-- JUST COME LOOK!
OH MY GOSH! WE'VE GOTTA CALL SOMEONE RIGHT AWAY!!
DON'T WORRY! I DID IT ALREADY!
YOU CALLED A PLUMBER? GOOD THINKING!
A PLUMBER? NO! EVEN BETTER--I CALLED RAMON!
WHO'S RAMON?
MY HUSBAND!
JUST CALL ME "MEESTER FEEXIT"!
TAPLABAN 4/3

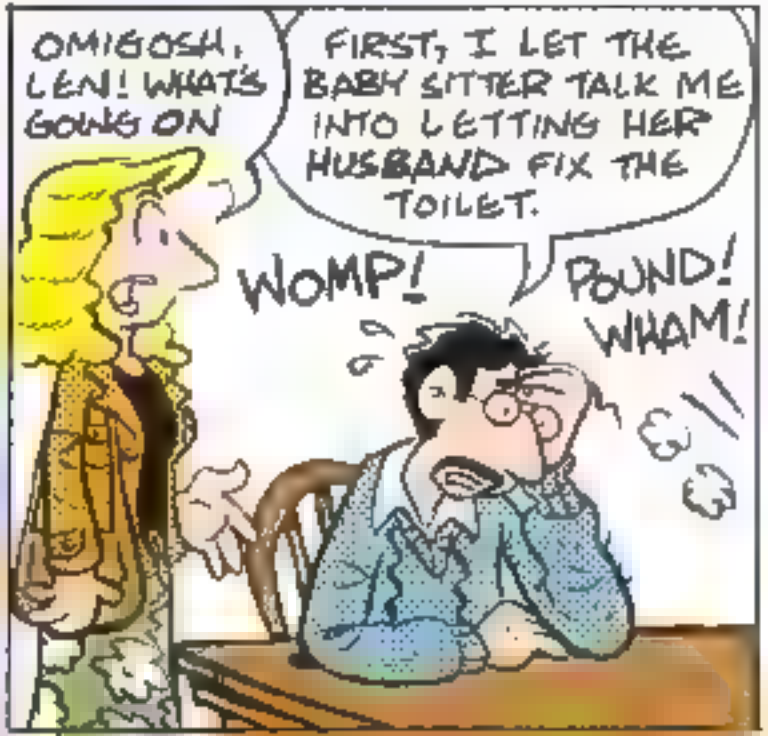
LOOK, RAMON--I APPRECIATE YOU COMING OVER TO HELP US, BUT I THINK THIS CALLS FOR A PROFESSIONAL PLUMBER!
SORRY, SEÑOR LEN--MY HUSBAND'S ENGLISH ISN'T SO GOOD.
WELL, TELL HIM I ALREADY LOOKED AT IT, AND IT ISN'T A SIMPLE REPAIR!
OK.
RAMON, SEÑOR LEN NO TIENE IDEA.
SNORT! ES MUY EVIDENTE!
RAMON SAYS HE'S SURE YOU DID A FINE JOB, BUT HE'D STILL LIKE TO GIVE IT A TRY.
YOU'RE PARA-PHRASING, AREN'T YOU?
SNICKER!
4/4


DON'T WORRY, SEÑOR LEN--THE LAST PEOPLE I BABY-SAT FOR, MY HUSBAND FIXED THINGS FOR THEM ALL THE TIME!
I'M SURE HE DID, ROLIO!
BUT IF THIS WAS A SIMPLE REPAIR I'D DO IT MYSELF! OBVIOUSLY, THIS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM! WE NEED A PROFESSIONAL PLUMBER RIGHT AWAY!
BLOOMP!
4/5
NUMERO UNO, TURN VALVE OFF!
I WAS ABOUT TO DO THAT!

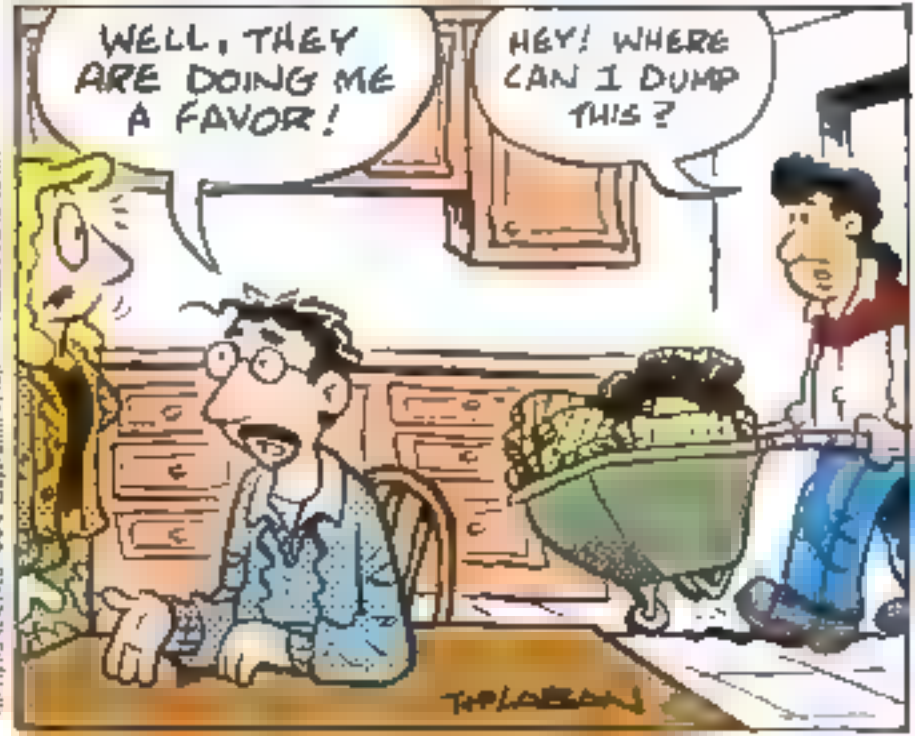

ABBY? LEN. I HAD TO COME HOME. WE HAD A MAJOR PLUMBING DISASTER!
OH NO! DID YOU CALL A PLUMBER?
NO... BUT ROCIO'S HUSBAND RAMON IS WORKING ON IT.
YOU GOT THE BABY SITTER'S HUSBAND INSTEAD OF A PLUMBER?!
417
THEY WERE VERY INSISTENT. BUT I THINK HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.
CAFE
OOPS-- I'M WRONG.
BAD NEWS, SEÑOR LEN...

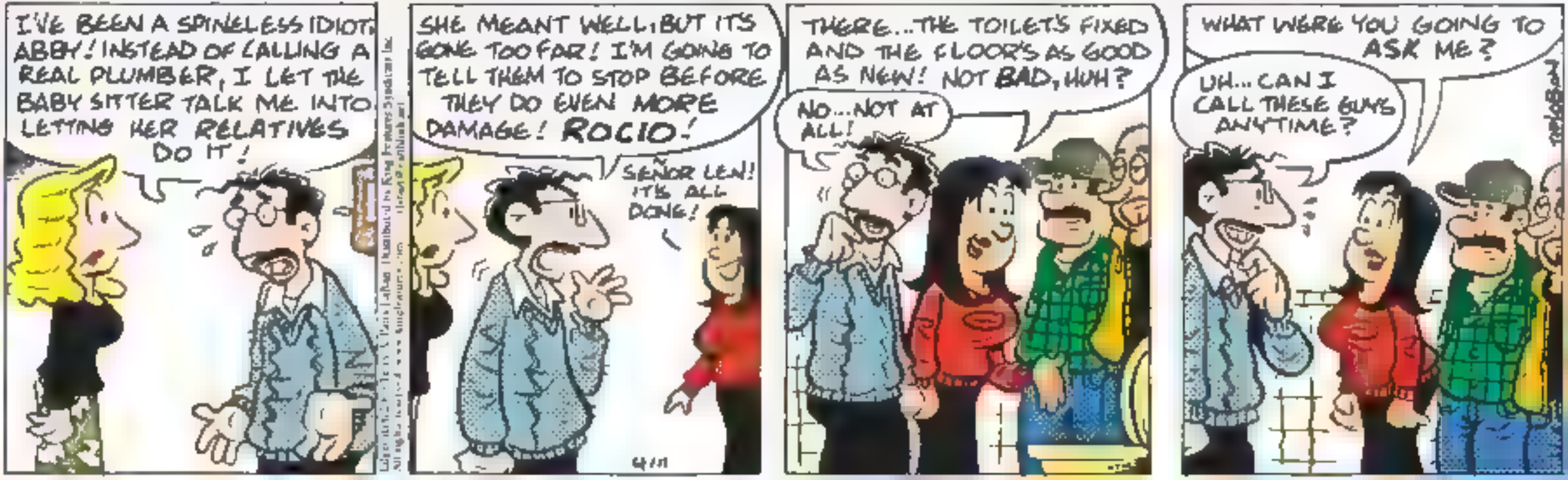

SEÑOR LEN, RAMON DOESN'T THINK HE CAN FIX YOUR TOILET AFTER ALL. WE NEED SOMEONE WHO REALLY KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOING!
THANKS ANYWAY, ROCIO. I APPRECIATE YOUR HUSBAND'S WILLINGNESS TO HELP US OUT. NOW, WHY DON'T YOU GET BACK TO BABY-SITTING WHILE I CALL A PROFESSIONAL PLUMBER!
A PLUMBER? NO, NO! I MEAN MY BROTHER-IN-LAW!
ENRIQUE? RAMON!


LISTEN, ENRIQUE -- I APPRECIATE YOU BEING WILLING TO COME OVER...
NO PROBLEM, LEN. MY SISTER-IN-LAW LIKES BABY-SITTING FOR YOU GUYS.
THE THING IS, THIS PLUMBING PROBLEM IS BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT. I THINK I SHOULD CALL A PROFESSIONAL.
LOOK, IT'S NO BIG DEAL. WE JUST NEED TO BREAK THROUGH THE FLOOR.
BREAKING THROUGH THE FLOOR IS A BIG DEAL!!
NAW-- NOT IF YOU HAVE A CROWBAR.
4/9


OMIGOSH, LEN! WHAT'S GOING ON
FIRST, I LET THE BABY SITTER TALK ME INTO LETTING HER HUSBAND FIX THE TOILET.
WOMP!
POUND! WHAM!

THEN, AFTER HE MESSES IT UP, HER BROTHER-IN-LAW AND HIS BROTHER SHOW UP AND START TEARING UP THE FLOOR!
WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING?!
4/10


WELL, THEY ARE DOING ME A FAVOR!
HEY! WHERE CAN I DUMP THIS?

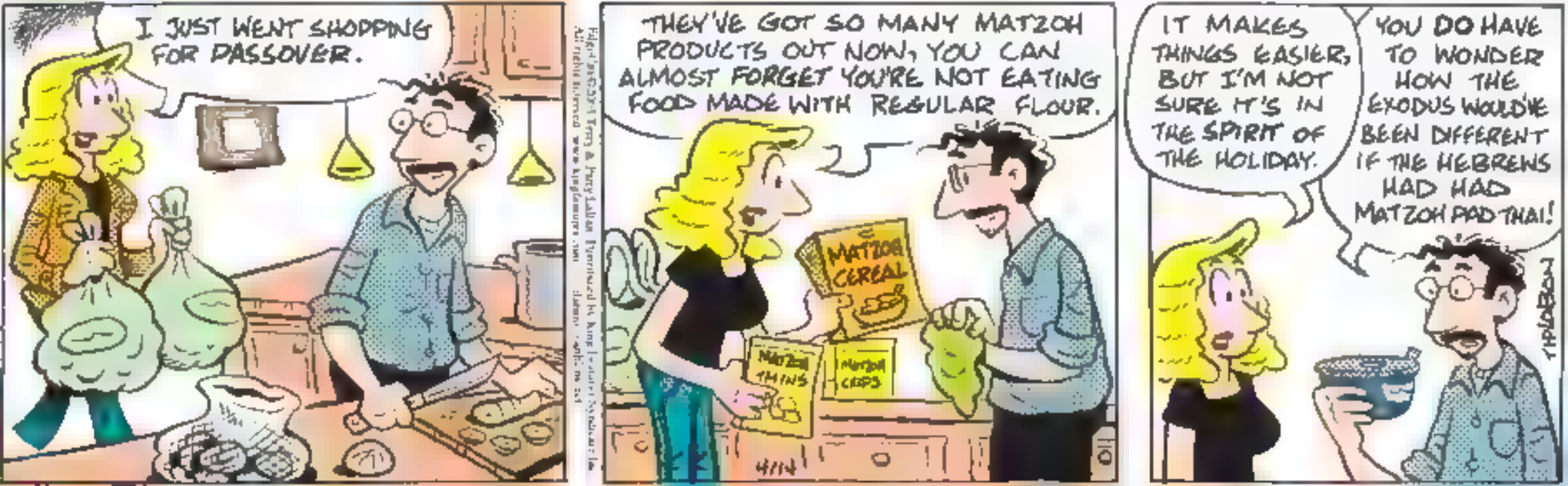

I'VE BEEN A SPINELESS IDIOT, ABBY! INSTEAD OF CALLING A REAL PLUMBER, I LET THE BABY SITTER TALK ME INTO LETTING HER RELATIVES DO IT!
SHE MEANT WELL, BUT ITS GONE TOO FAR! I'M GOING TO TELL THEM TO STOP BEFORE THEY DO EVEN MORE DAMAGE! ROCIO!
SEÑOR LEN! IT'S ALL DONE!
THERE...THE TOILET'S FIXED AND THE FLOOR'S AS GOOD AS NEW! NOT BAD, HUH?
NO...NOT AT ALL!
WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO ASK ME?
UH...CAN I CALL THESE GUYS ANYTIME?

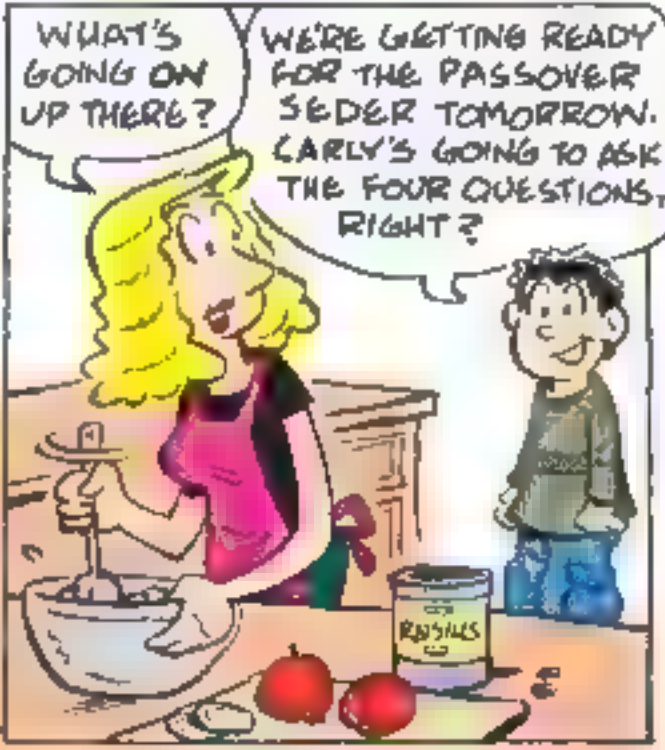
WELL, ROCIO, I SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED. YOUR HUSBAND AND BROTHER-IN-LAW DID A GREAT JOB OF FIXING OUR TOILET.

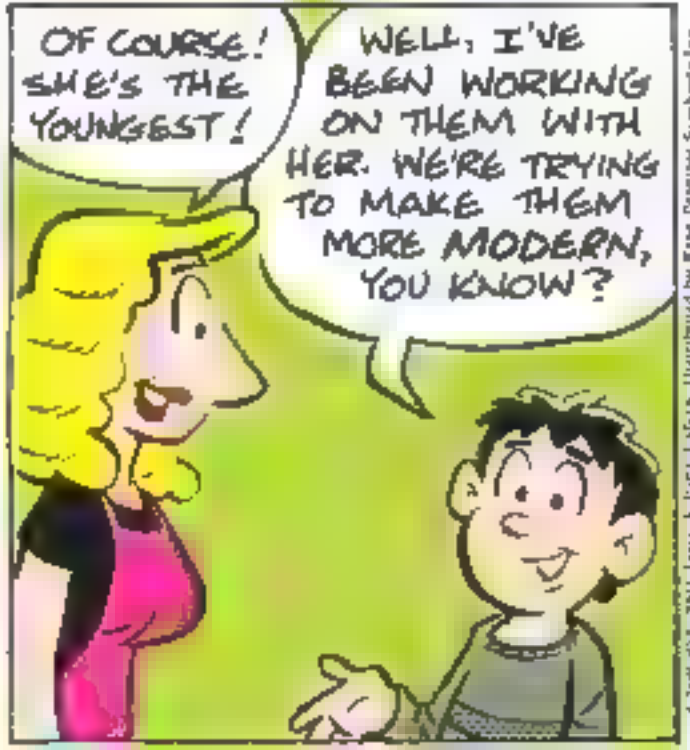
HOW MUCH DO I OWE THEM?
OH, NO, SEÑOR LEN! YOU GAVE ME A JOB BABY-SITTING! THAT'S ENOUGH!
4/12

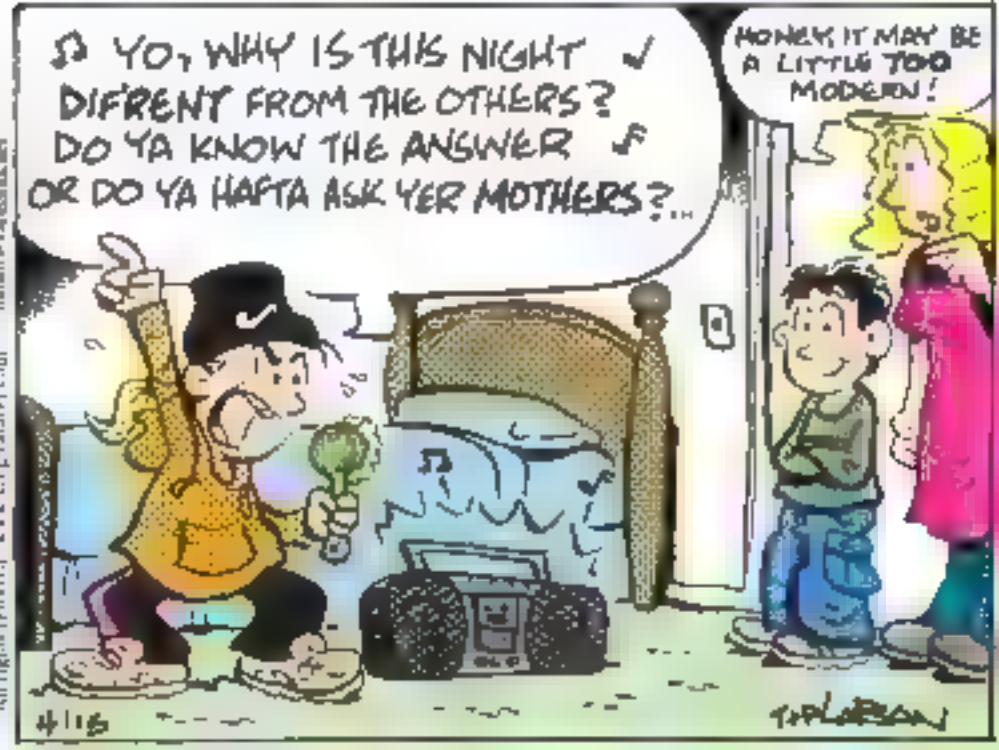
IF YOU WANT TO PAY MY HUSBAND BACK, DO HIM A FAVOR SOMETIME!
WELL, OK. I OWN A COURIER SERVICE, RAMON. IF I CAN HELP YOU OUT, GIVE ME A CALL.

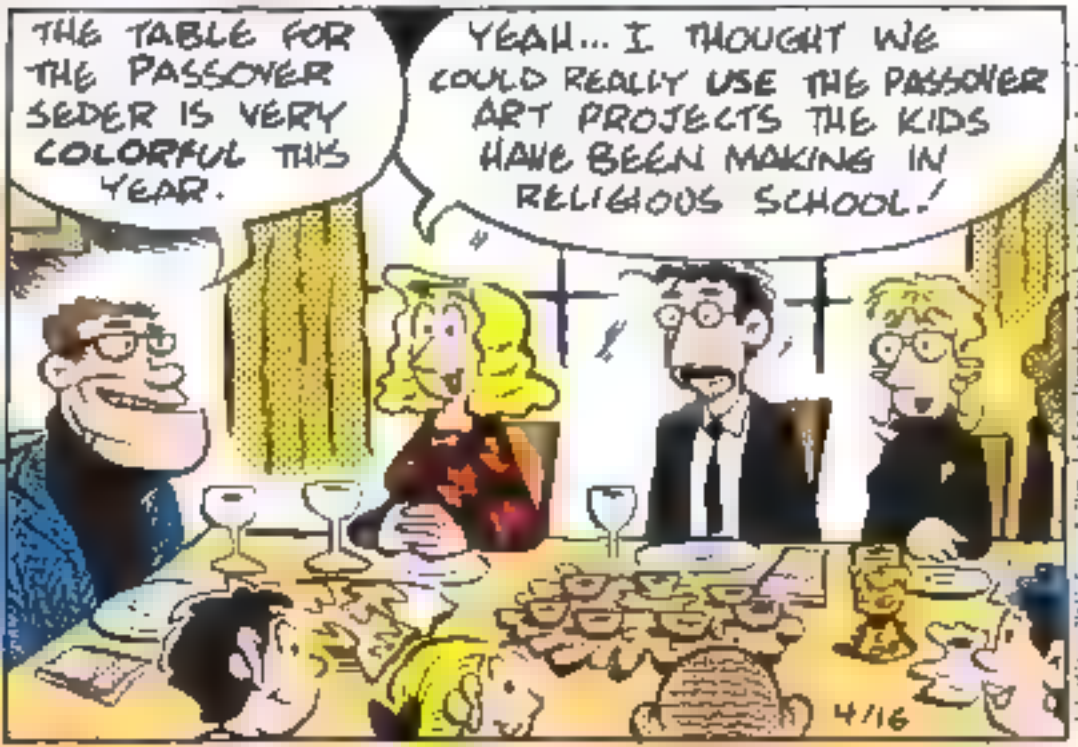
SCHOOL
OK--NEXT WE GOTTA TAKE MY AUNT TO THE GROCERY STORE...
LEADFOOT COURIERS, INC

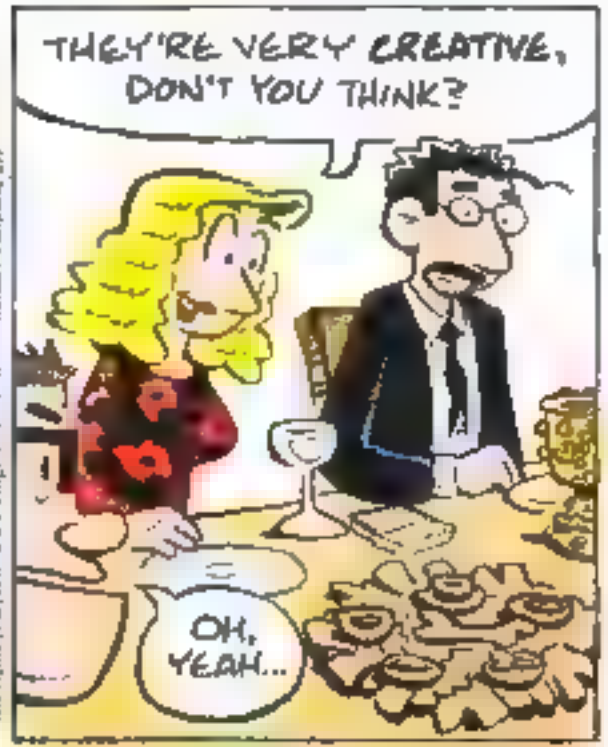

I JUST WENT SHOPPING FOR PASSOVER.
THEY'VE GOT SO MANY MATZOH PRODUCTS OUT NOW, YOU CAN ALMOST FORGET YOU'RE NOT EATING FOOD MADE WITH REGULAR FLOUR.
MATZOH CEREAL
MATZOH THINS
MATZOH CHIPS
4/14
IT MAKES THINGS EASIER, BUT I'M NOT SURE IT'S IN THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAY.
YOU DO HAVE TO WONDER HOW THE EXODUS WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT IF THE HEBREWS HAD HAD MATZOH PAD THAI!


WHAT'S GOING ON UP THERE?
WE'RE GETTING READY FOR THE PASSOVER SEDER TOMORROW. CARLY'S GOING TO ASK THE FOUR QUESTIONS, RIGHT?
RAISINS

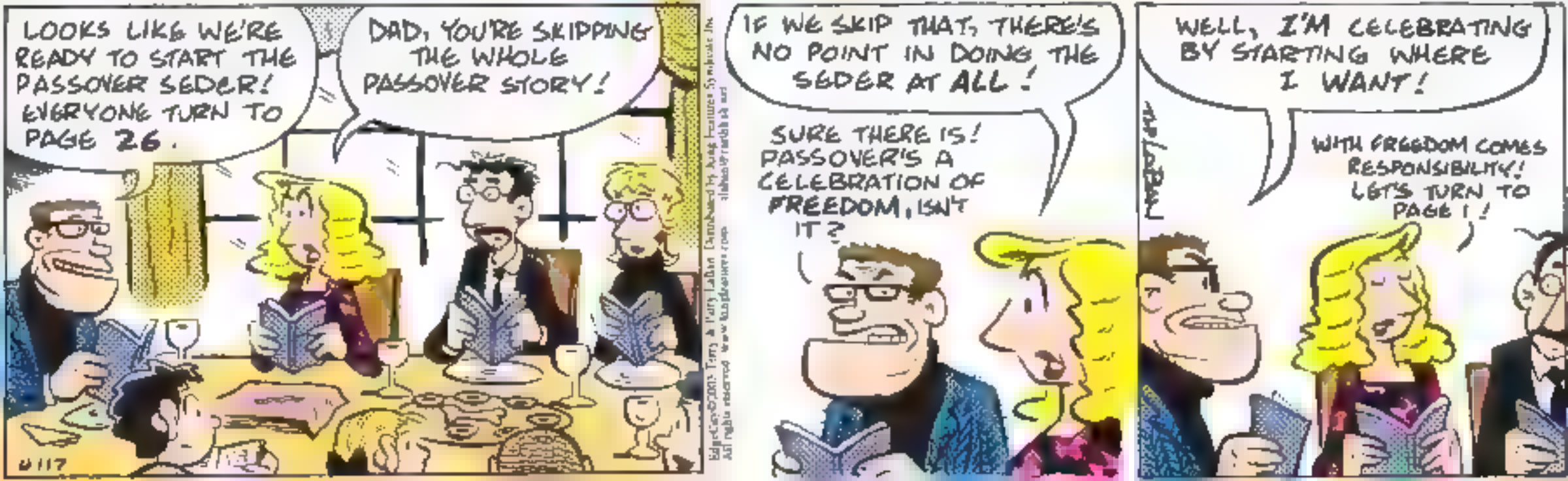

OF COURSE! SHE'S THE YOUNGEST!
WELL, I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THEM WITH HER. WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE THEM MORE MODERN, YOU KNOW?

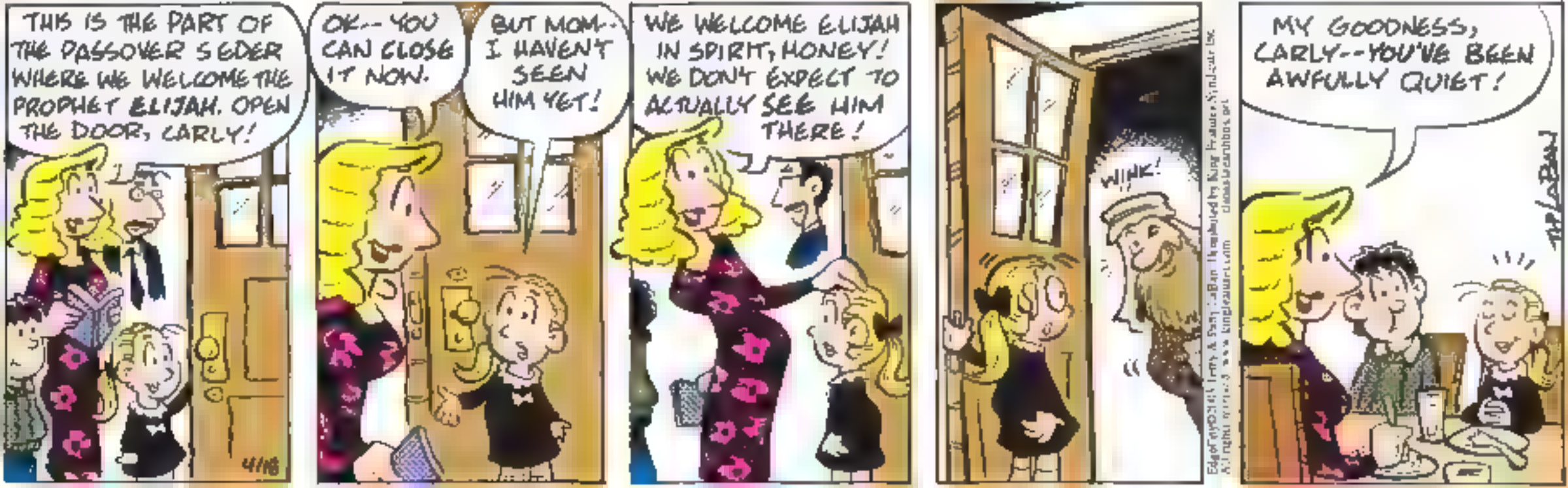

♫ YO, WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFRENT FROM THE OTHERS? DO YA KNOW THE ANSWER OR DO YA HAFTA ASK YER MOTHERS?..
HONEY, IT MAY BE A LITTLE TOO MODERN!
4/16
TOPLAZAN

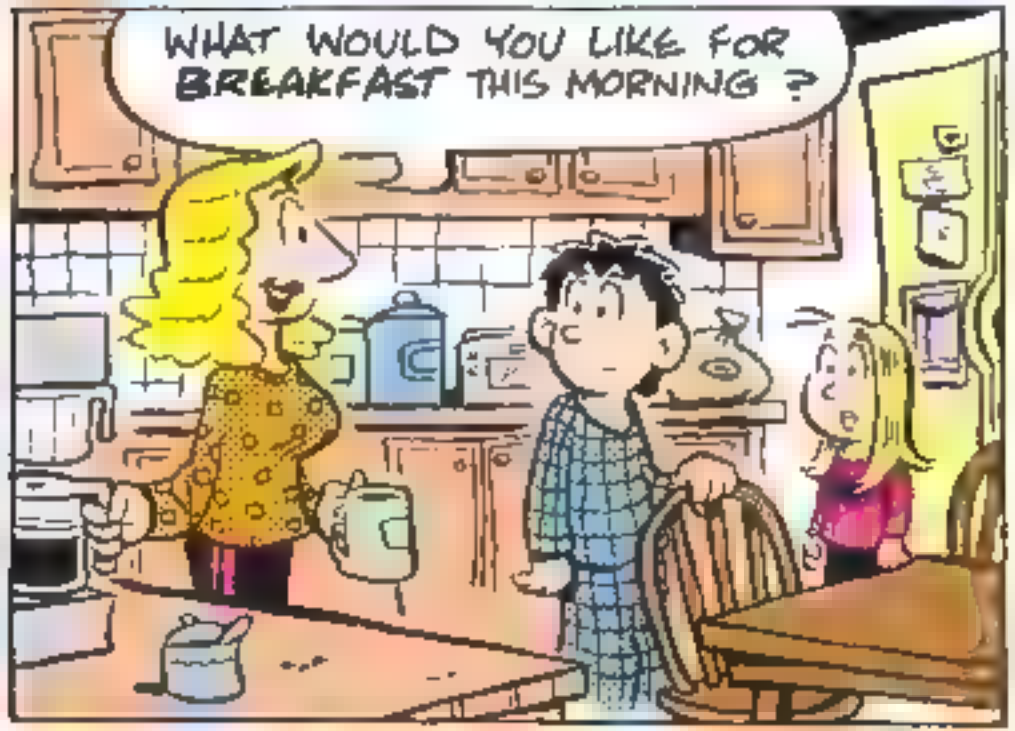

THE TABLE FOR THE PASSOVER SEDER IS VERY COLORFUL THIS YEAR.
YEAH... I THOUGHT WE COULD REALLY USE THE PASSOVER ART PROJECTS THE KIDS HAVE BEEN MAKING IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL!
4/16

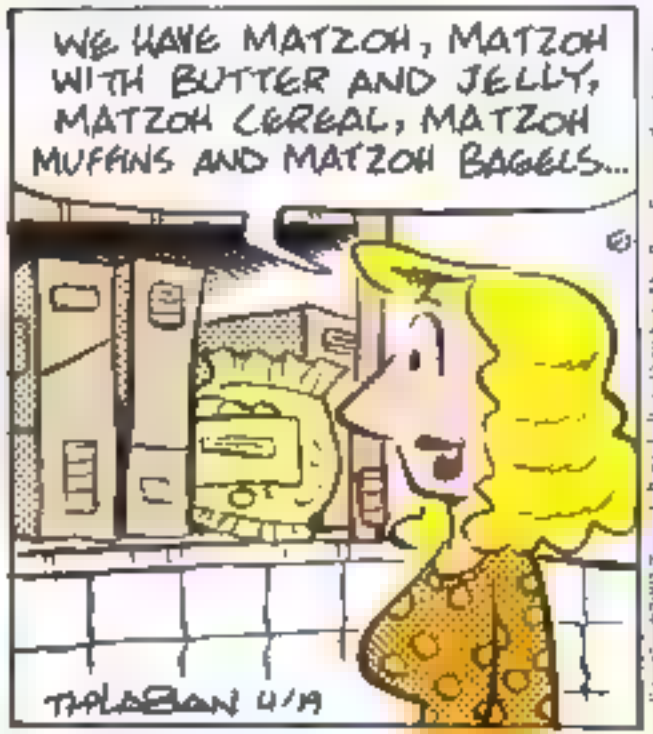

THEY'RE VERY CREATIVE, DON'T YOU THINK?
OH, YEAH...

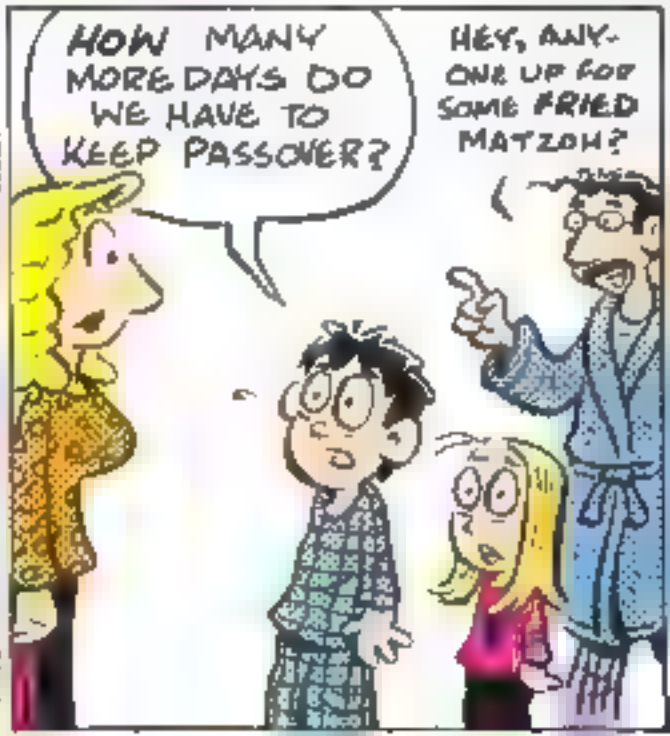
THOUGH PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK I WOULD'VE MADE THE CANDLESTICKS OUT OF PAPER CUPS...

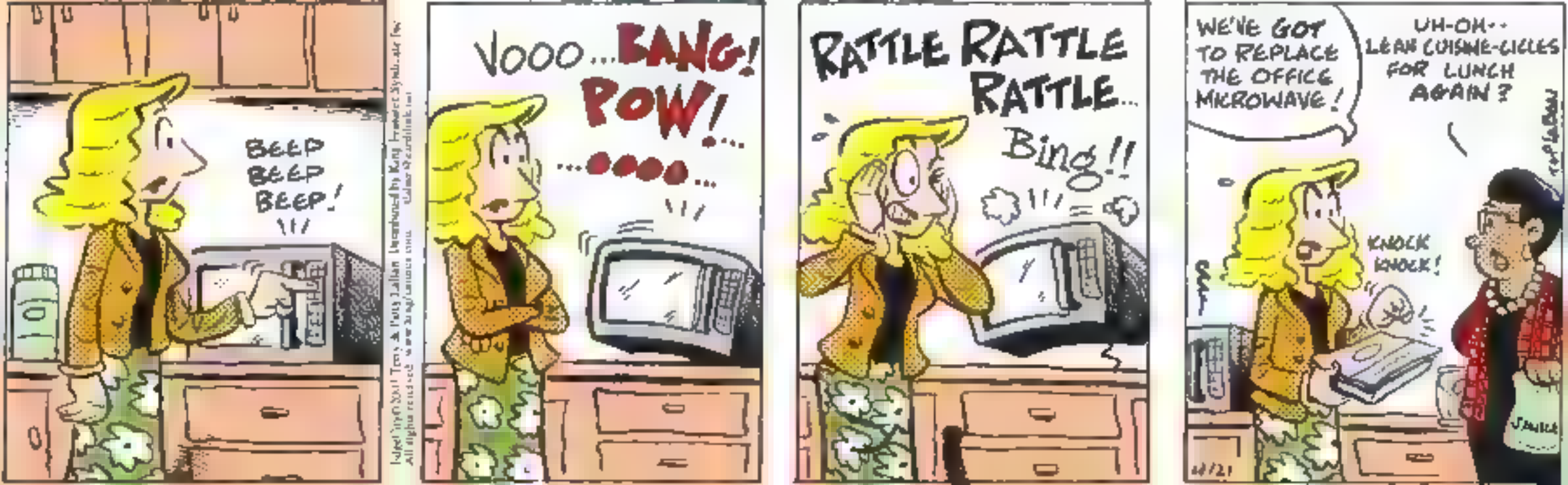

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE READY TO START THE PASSOVER SEDER! EVERYONE TURN TO PAGE 26.
DAD, YOU'RE SKIPPING THE WHOLE PASSOVER STORY!
IF WE SKIP THAT, THERE'S NO POINT IN DOING THE SEDER AT ALL!
SURE THERE IS! PASSOVER'S A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM, ISN'T IT?
WELL, I'M CELEBRATING BY STARTING WHERE I WANT!
WITH FREEDOM COMES RESPONSIBILITY! LET'S TURN TO PAGE 1!

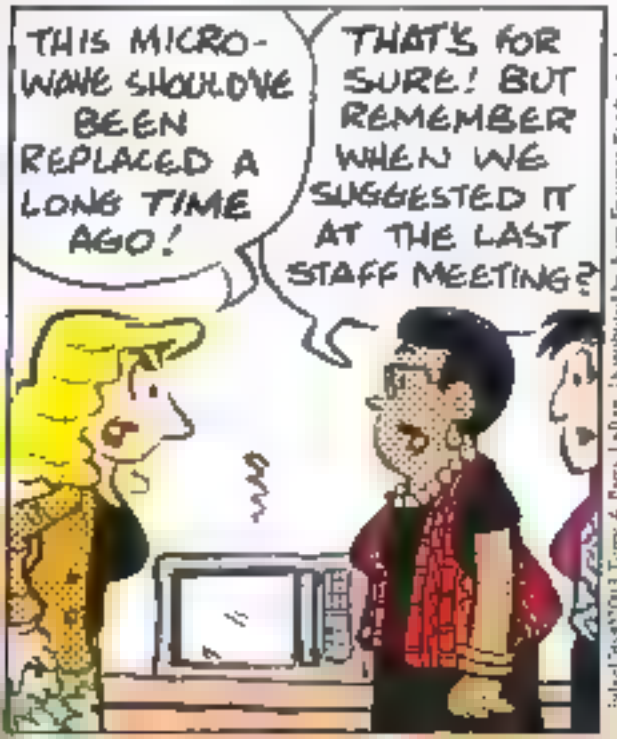

THIS IS THE PART OF THE PASSOVER SEDER WHERE WE WELCOME THE PROPHET ELIJAH. OPEN THE DOOR, CARLY!
OK-- YOU CAN CLOSE IT NOW.
BUT MOM-- I HAVENT SEEN HIM YET!
WE WELCOME ELIJAH IN SPIRIT, HONEY! WE DONT EXPECT TO ACTUALLY SEE HIM THERE!
WINK!
MY GOODNESS, CARLY--YOU'VE BEEN AWFULLY QUIET!


WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR BREAKFAST THIS MORNING ?


WE HAVE MATZOH, MATZOH WITH BUTTER AND JELLY, MATZOH CEREAL, MATZOH MUFFINS AND MATZOH BAGELS...
THALDEAN 4/19

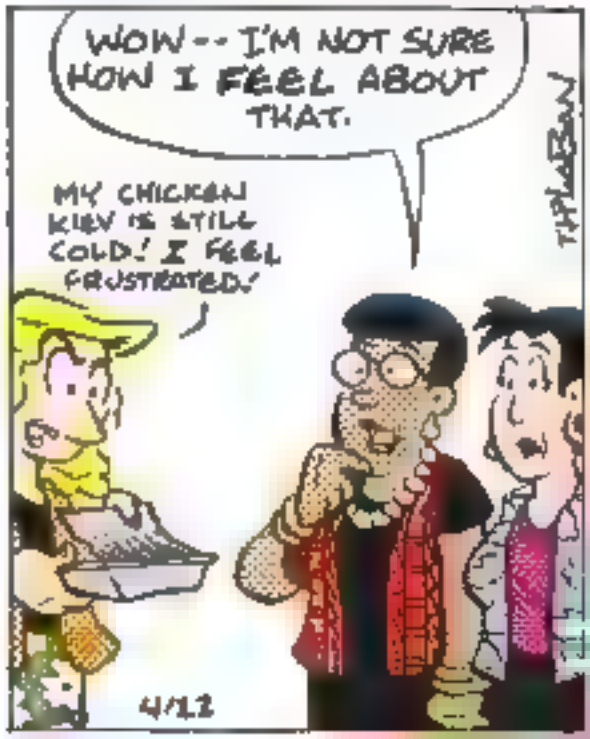

HOW MANY MORE DAYS DO WE HAVE TO KEEP PASSOVER?
HEY, ANYONE UP FOR SOME FRIED MATZOH?


BEEP BEEP BEEP!
VOOO...BANG! POW!...
...●●●●...
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE...
Bing!!
WE'VE GOT TO REPLACE THE OFFICE MICROWAVE!
UH-OH-- LEAN CUISINE-CICLES FOR LUNCH AGAIN?
KNOCK KNOCK!

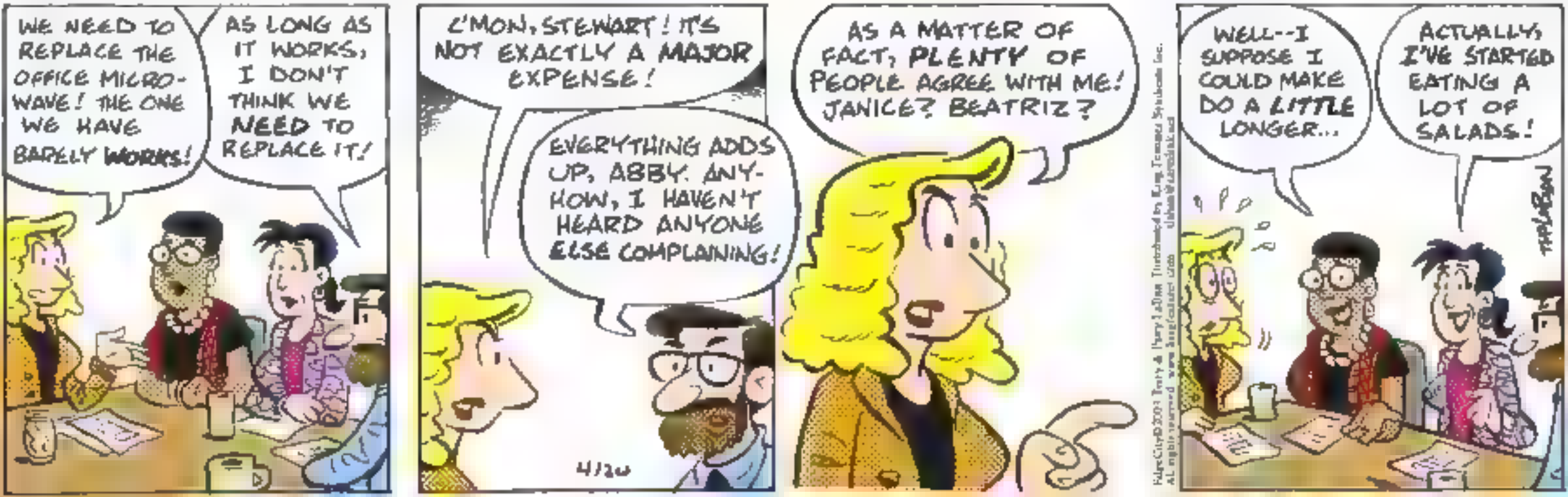

THIS MICRO-WAVE SHOULD'VE BEEN REPLACED A LONG TIME AGO!
THAT'S FOR SURE! BUT REMEMBER WHEN WE SUGGESTED IT AT THE LAST STAFF MEETING?

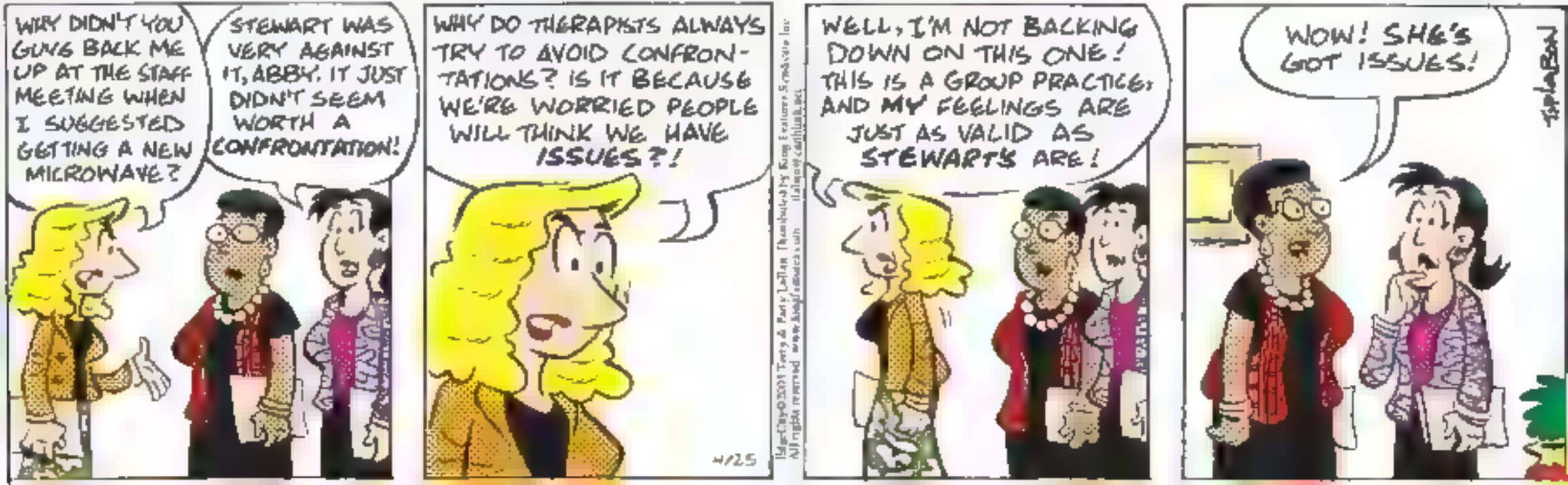
STEWART FELT VERY STRONGLY THAT AS LONG AS IT STILL WORKED, WE SHOULD USE IT.
WELL, AT THE NEXT MEETING, WE SHOULD INSIST ON REPLACING THE MICROWAVE--NO MATTER WHAT STEWART SAYS!

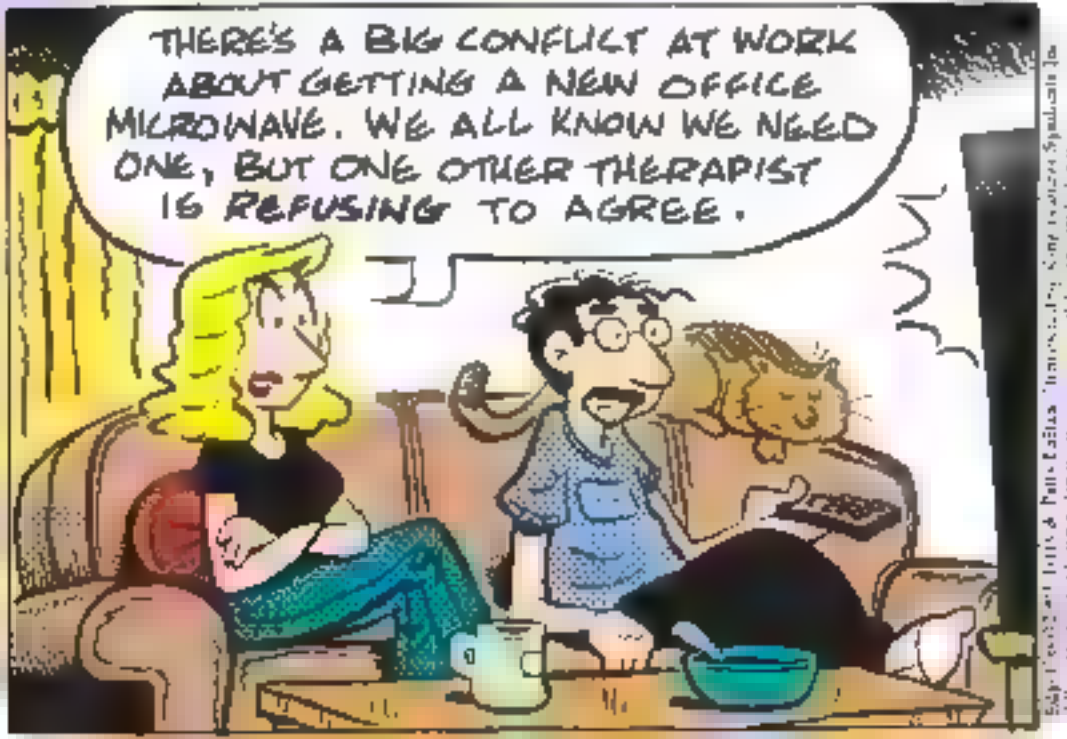
I DON'T KNOW, ABBY--HE WON'T BE HAPPY.
SO? JUST BECAUSE WE'RE THERAPISTS DOESN'T MEAN EVERY ISSUE HAS TO REVOLVE AROUND PEOPLE'S EMOTIONS!


WOW--I'M NOT SURE HOW I FEEL ABOUT THAT.
MY CHICKEN KIEV IS STILL COLD! I FEEL FRUSTRATED!
4/12

ONE THING I WANTED TO MENTION AT THE STAFF MEETING WAS THAT WE NEED TO REPLACE THE OFFICE MICROWAVE.
DOESN'T THE OLD ONE STILL WORK?
4/23
BARELY. IT MAKES TERRIBLE NOISES, AND TAKES FOREVER TO HEAT FOOD!
WELL, I'M NOT SURE THAT MEANS IT SHOULD BE REPLACED!
WE SHOULDN'T BUY THINGS JUST TO BUY THEM. I HAVEN'T NOTICED A PROBLEM!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU EAT ALL YOUR LUNCHES OUT!
IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE TO KEEP THIS FROM GETTING PERSONAL.
TOP LABAN


WE NEED TO REPLACE THE OFFICE MICRO-WAVE! THE ONE WE HAVE BARELY WORKS!
AS LONG AS IT WORKS, I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO REPLACE IT!
C'MON, STEWART! IT'S NOT EXACTLY A MAJOR EXPENSE!
EVERYTHING ADDS UP, ABBY. ANY-HOW, I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYONE ELSE COMPLAINING!
4/20
AS A MATTER OF FACT, PLENTY OF PEOPLE AGREE WITH ME! JANICE? BEATRIZ?
WELL--I SUPPOSE I COULD MAKE DO A LITTLE LONGER...
ACTUALLY, I'VE STARTED EATING A LOT OF SALADS!
THAVEN

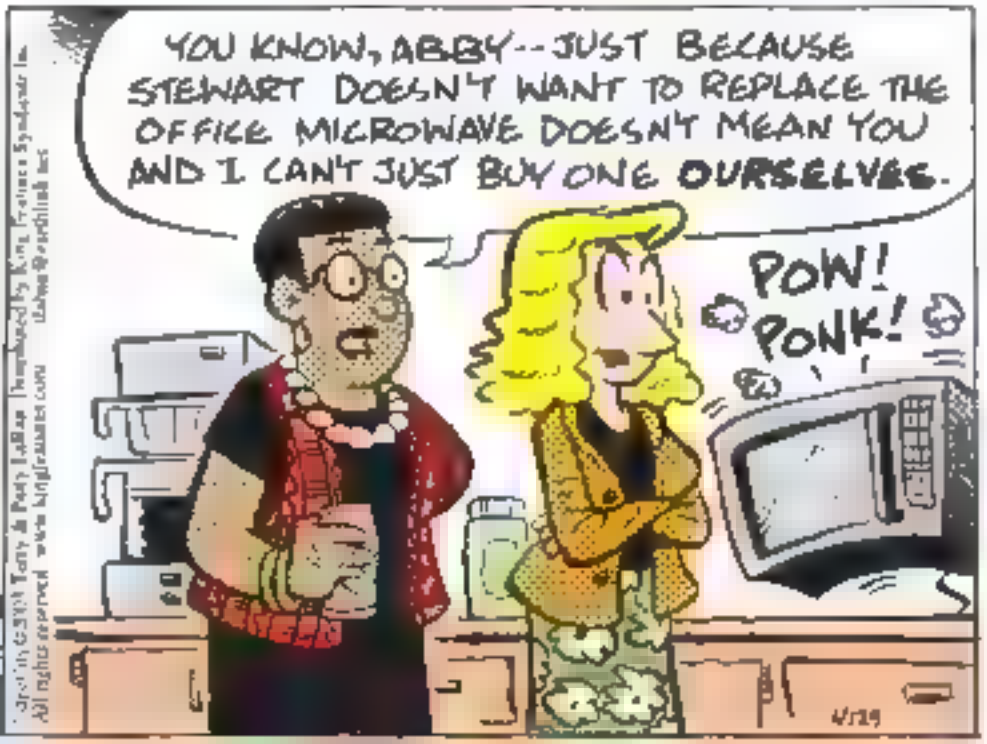

WHY DIDN'T YOU GUYS BACK ME UP AT THE STAFF MEETING WHEN I SUGGESTED GETTING A NEW MICROWAVE?
STEWART WAS VERY AGAINST IT, ABBY. IT JUST DIDN'T SEEM WORTH A CONFRONTATION!
WHY DO THERAPISTS ALWAYS TRY TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS? IS IT BECAUSE WE'RE WORRIED PEOPLE WILL THINK WE HAVE ISSUES?!
4/25
WELL, I'M NOT BACKING DOWN ON THIS ONE! THIS IS A GROUP PRACTICE, AND MY FEELINGS ARE JUST AS VALID AS STEWART'S ARE!
WOW! SHE'S GOT ISSUES!
TOPLABON


THERE'S A BIG CONFLICT AT WORK ABOUT GETTING A NEW OFFICE MICROWAVE. WE ALL KNOW WE NEED ONE, BUT ONE OTHER THERAPIST IS REFUSING TO AGREE.

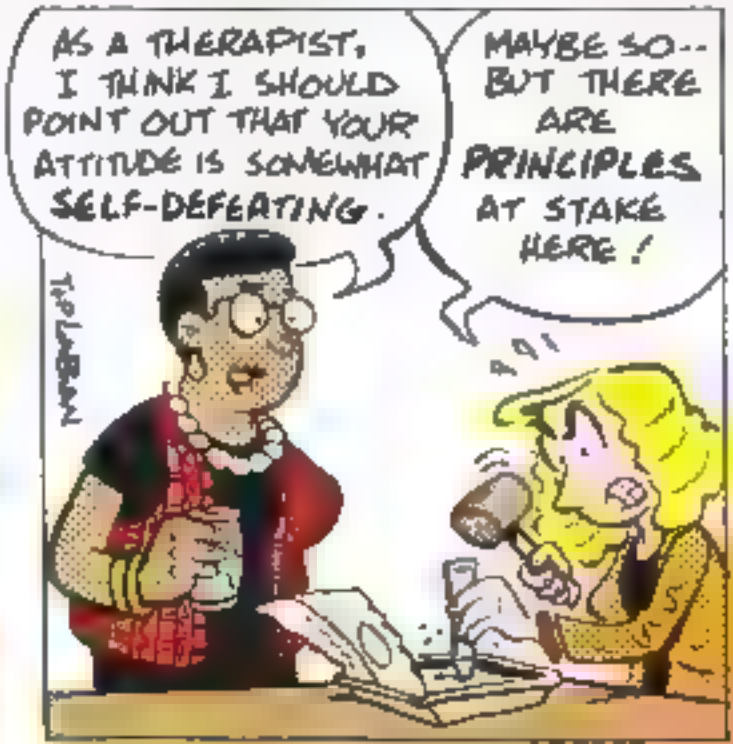
HE'S ON THIS PETTY LITTLE POWER TRIP AND EVERYONE ELSE IS GOING ALONG WITH IT. IT'S ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS!

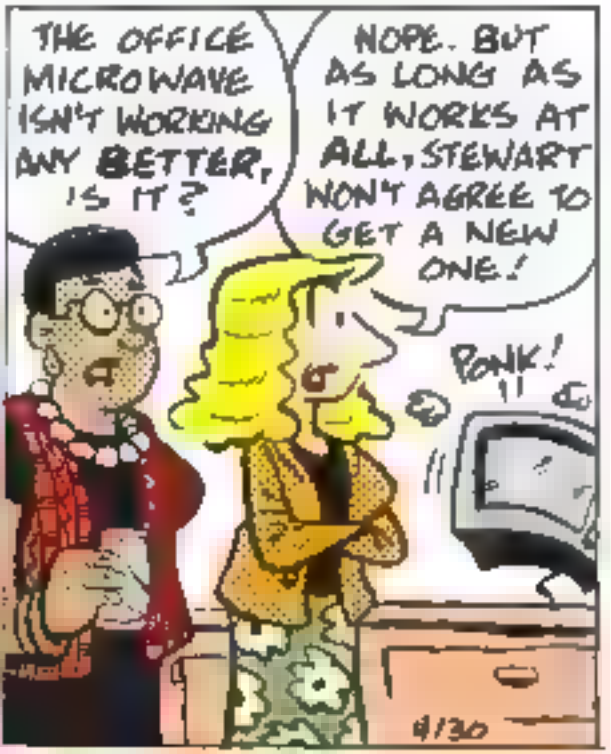
AND PEOPLE PAY YOU GUYS TO HELP THEM IMPROVE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH?!
WHEN IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH US, WE'RE A LOT MORE EFFECTIVE.
4/26

ABBY, SINCE OUR DISCUSSION AT THE STAFF MEETING, I'VE FELT SOME TENSION BETWEEN US.
PONK! FOOMP!
I HOPE OUR DISAGREEMENT OVER WHETHER TO REPLACE THE OFFICE MICROWAVE DOESN'T REFLECT SOME DEEPER PERSONAL ISSUES.
4/28
NO, STEWART--I DON'T THINK THIS IS ABOUT PERSONAL ISSUES AT ALL!
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
BING!
IT'S ABOUT THE FACT THAT I HAVE A CLIENT IN 5 MINUTES AND MY EGGPLANT PARMESAN IS STILL FROZEN!
SEE? THERE'S THAT TENSION AGAIN!
T.J. LABAN

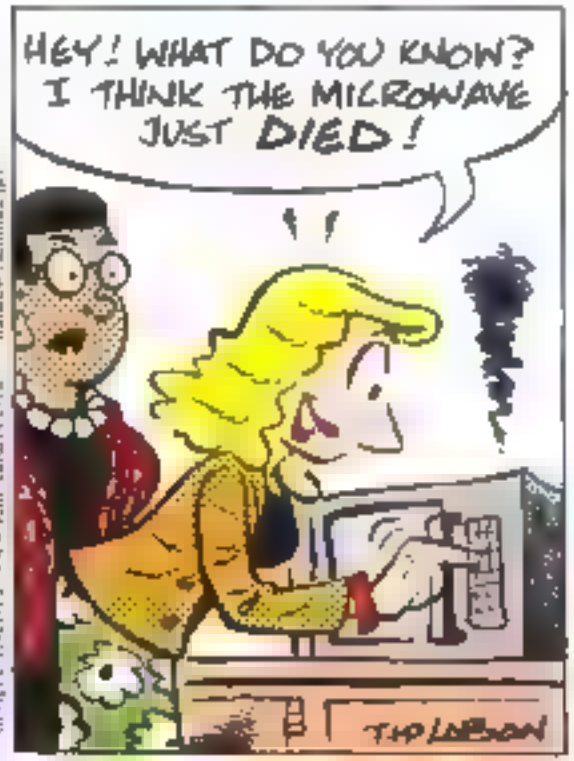

YOU KNOW, ABBY--JUST BECAUSE STEWART DOESN'T WANT TO REPLACE THE OFFICE MICROWAVE DOESN'T MEAN YOU AND I CAN'T JUST BUY ONE OURSELVES.
POW! PONK!

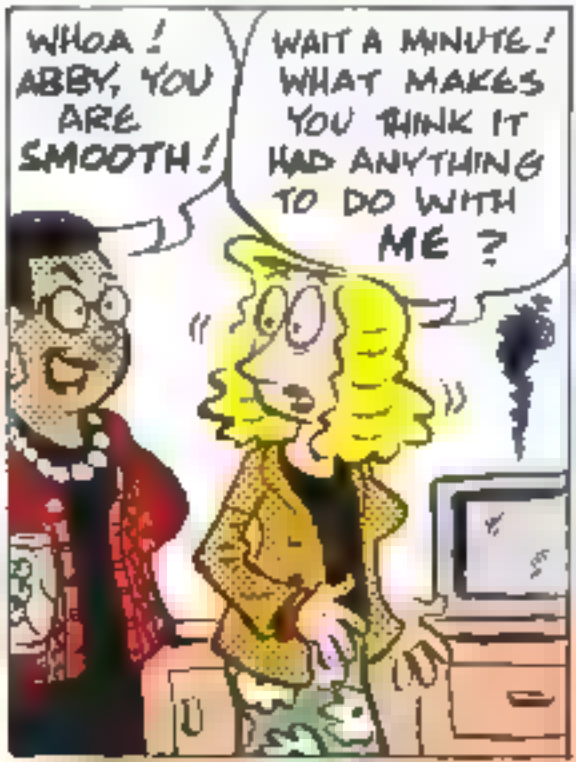
AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT A BIG-TICKET ITEM!
BECAUSE, JANICE, THE WHOLE GROUP USES IT, SO IT SHOULD BE SOMETHING WE ALL PAY FOR!


AS A THERAPIST, I THINK I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT YOUR ATTITUDE IS SOMEWHAT SELF-DEFEATING.
MAYBE SO--BUT THERE ARE PRINCIPLES AT STAKE HERE!

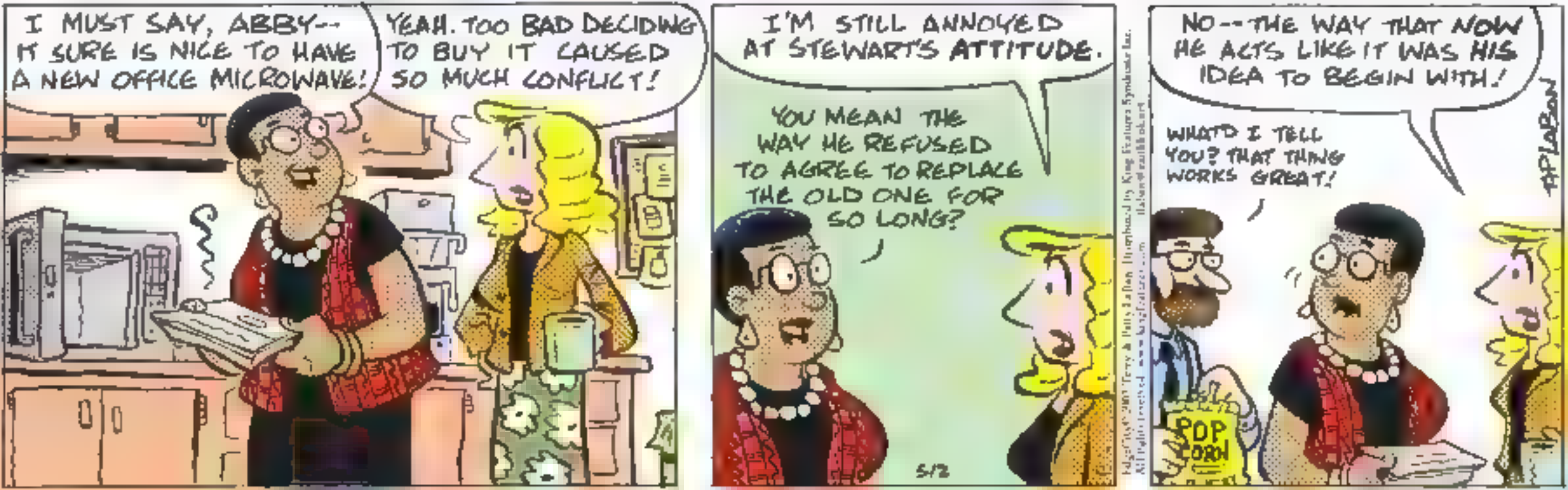

THE OFFICE MICROWAVE ISN'T WORKING ANY BETTER, IS IT?
NOPE. BUT AS LONG AS IT WORKS AT ALL, STEWART WON'T AGREE TO GET A NEW ONE!
PONK!
4/30

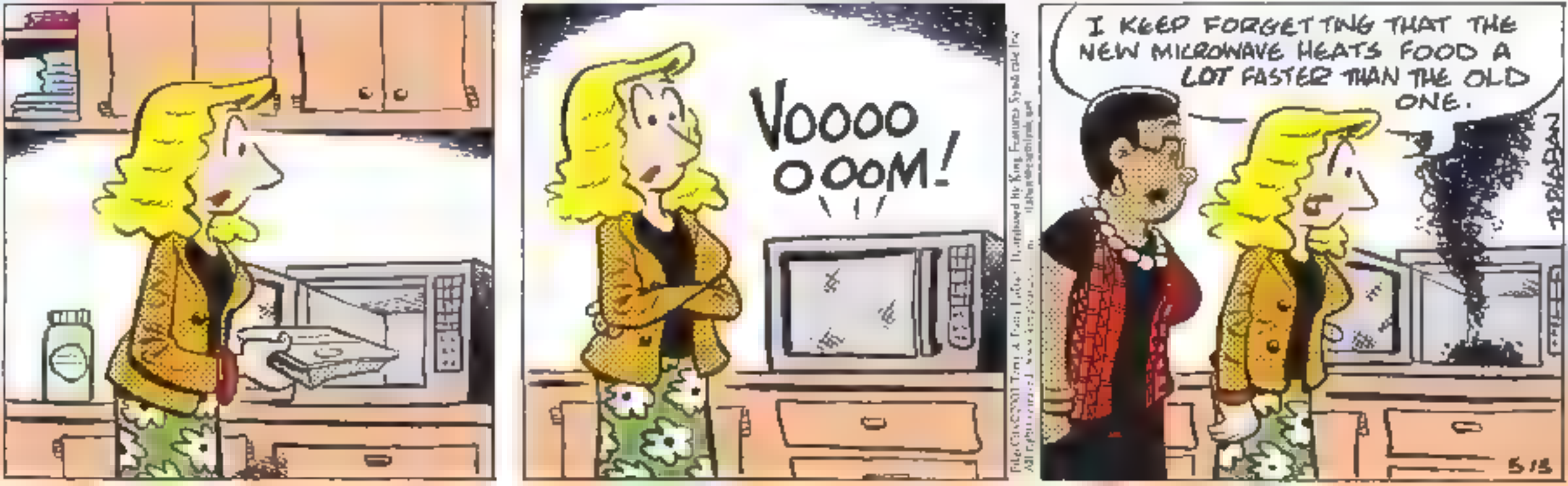
AT THIS POINT, I'M JUST HOPING THE STUPID THING BREAKS DOWN!
THAT WOULD BE CONVENIENT!
BLOOP!

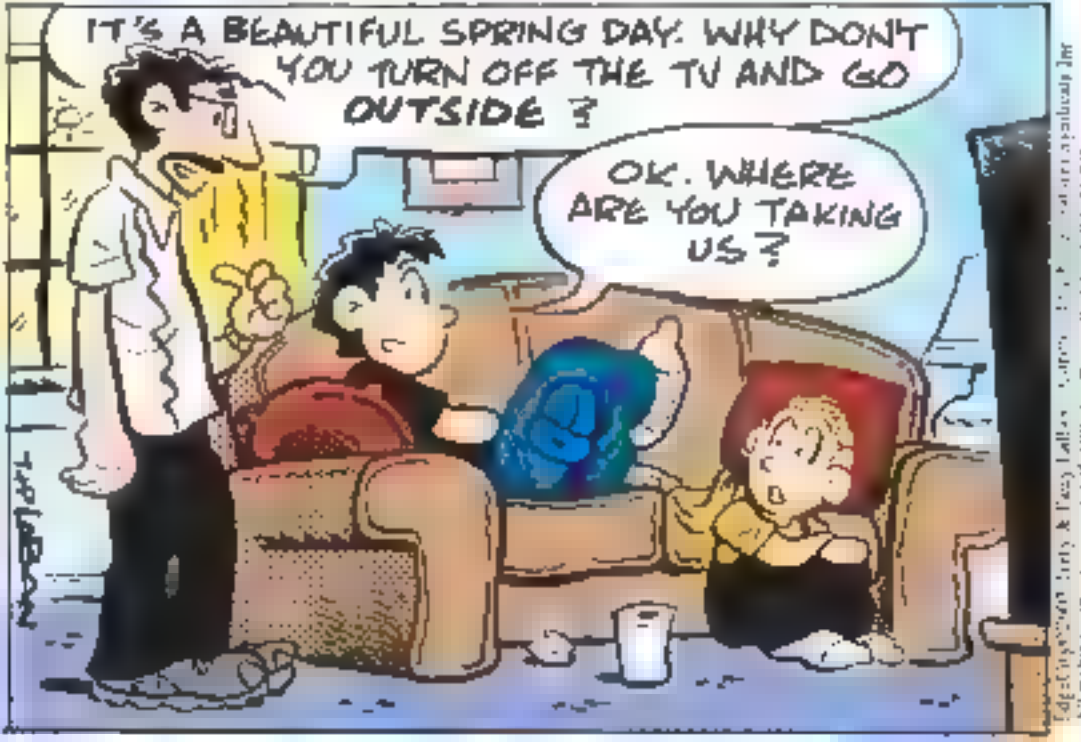

HEY! WHAT DO YOU KNOW? I THINK THE MICROWAVE JUST DIED!
THP/LARSON


WHOA! ABBY, YOU ARE SMOOTH!
WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH ME?

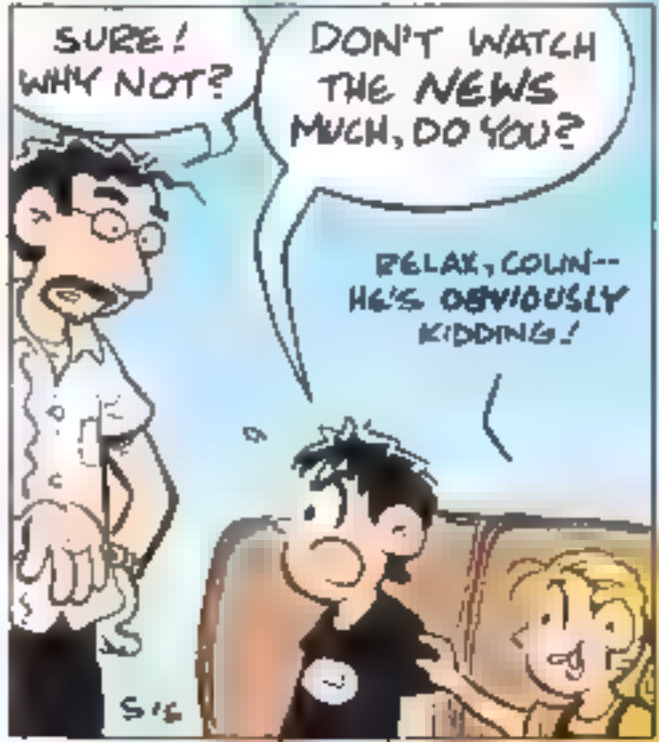
I JUST TOLD STEWART THAT THE OFFICE MICROWAVE BROKE DOWN WHILE I WAS USING IT.
DID HE FINALLY AGREE WE NEED TO BUY A NEW ONE?
YEAH. BUT THE WAY HE LOOKED AT ME, I COULD TELL HE THOUGHT I BROKE IT ON PURPOSE!
I HAVE A FEELING THAT, FROM NOW ON, HE'LL THINK I'M THE KIND OF PERSON WHO'S WILLING TO BEND THE RULES TO GET WHAT I WANT!
YOU SAY THAT LIKE IT'S A BAD THING.
NICE WORK, ABBY. YOU GO, GIRL!

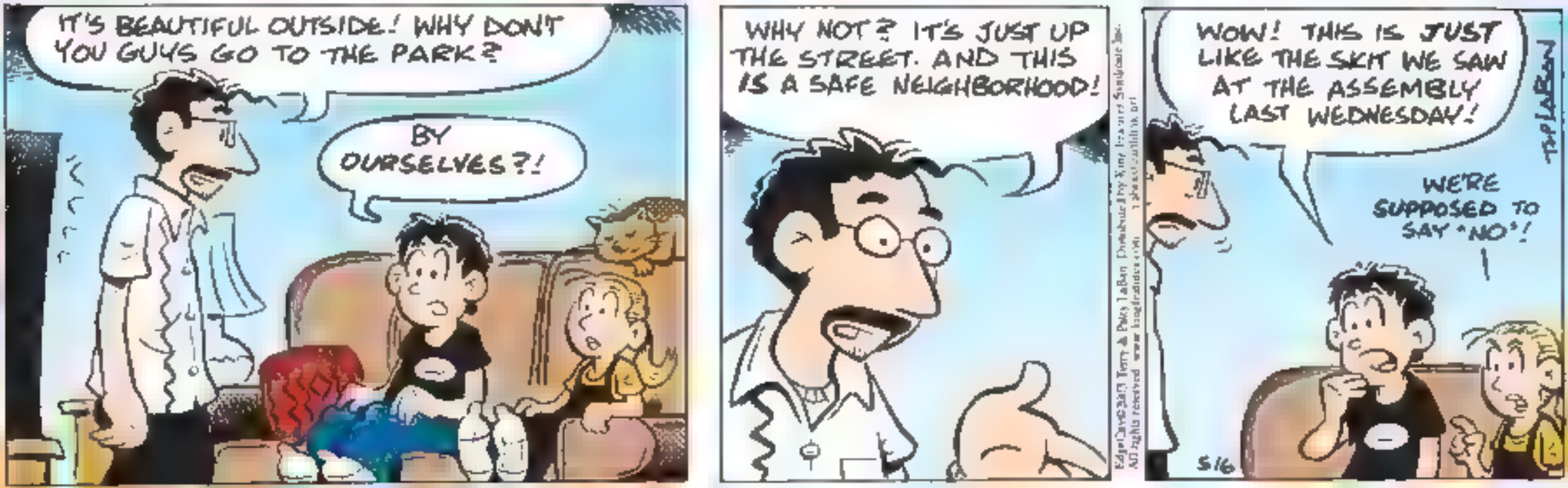

I MUST SAY, ABBY-- IT SURE IS NICE TO HAVE A NEW OFFICE MICROWAVE!
YEAH. TOO BAD DECIDING TO BUY IT CAUSED SO MUCH CONFLICT!
I'M STILL ANNOYED AT STEWART'S ATTITUDE.
YOU MEAN THE WAY HE REFUSED TO AGREE TO REPLACE THE OLD ONE FOR SO LONG?
5/2
NO -- THE WAY THAT NOW HE ACTS LIKE IT WAS HIS IDEA TO BEGIN WITH!
WHAT'D I TELL YOU? THAT THING WORKS GREAT!
POP CORN
APLARSON

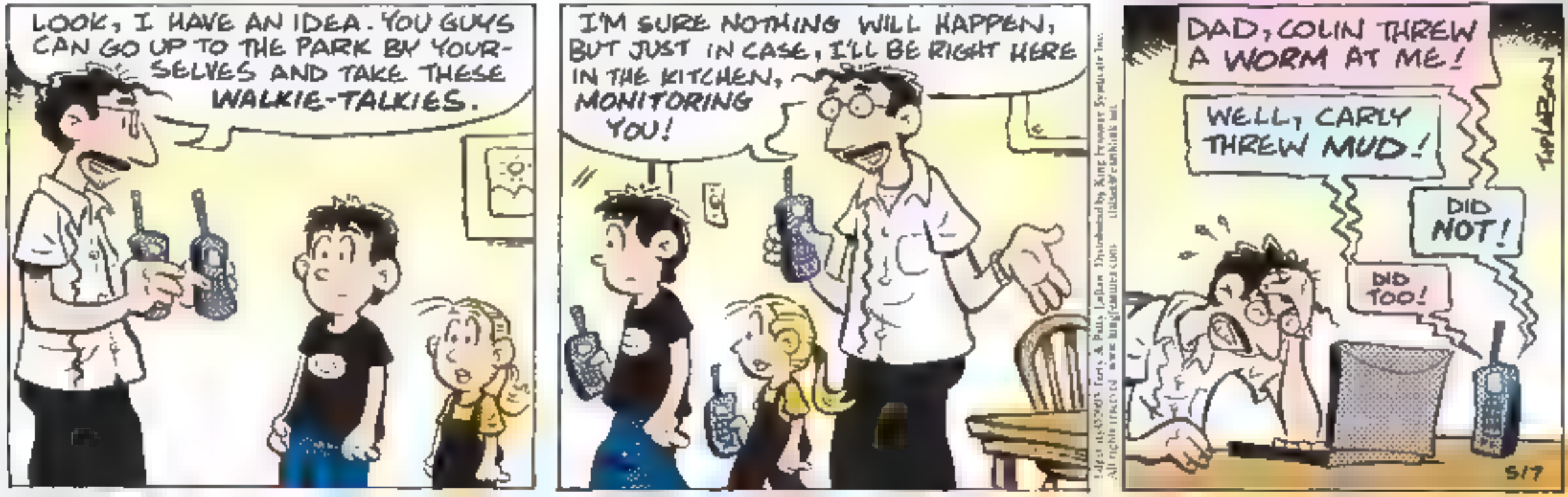

VOOOO OOOM!
I KEEP FORGETTING THAT THE NEW MICROWAVE HEATS FOOD A LOT FASTER THAN THE OLD ONE.
5/15

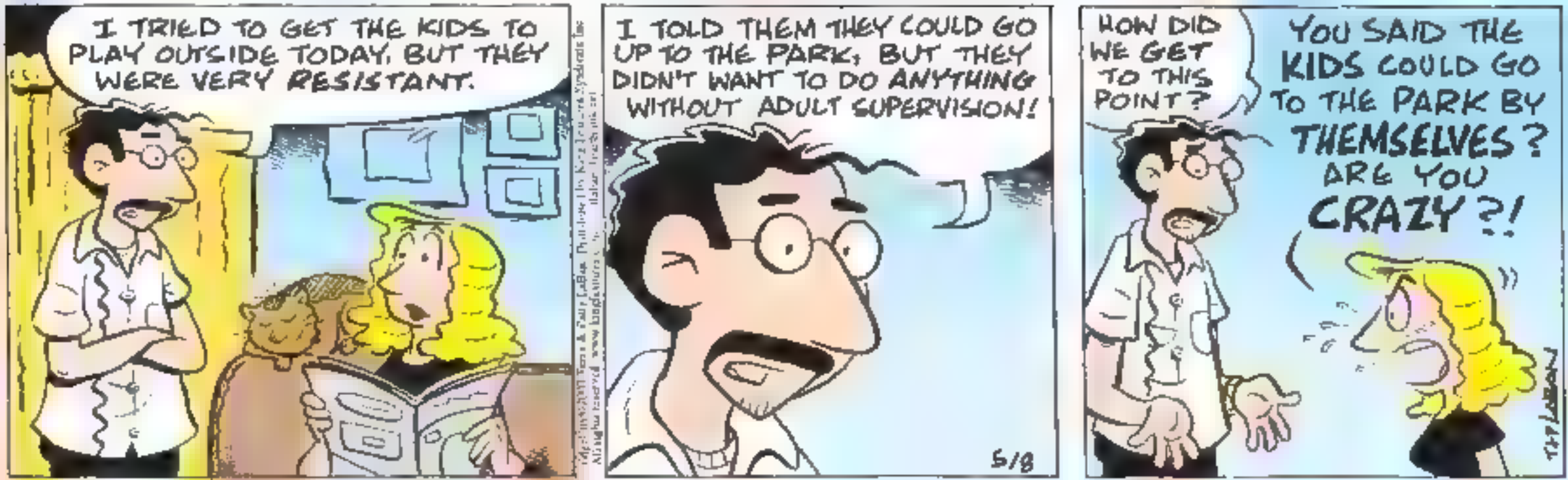

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SPRING DAY. WHY DON'T YOU TURN OFF THE TV AND GO OUTSIDE?
OK. WHERE ARE YOU TAKING US?

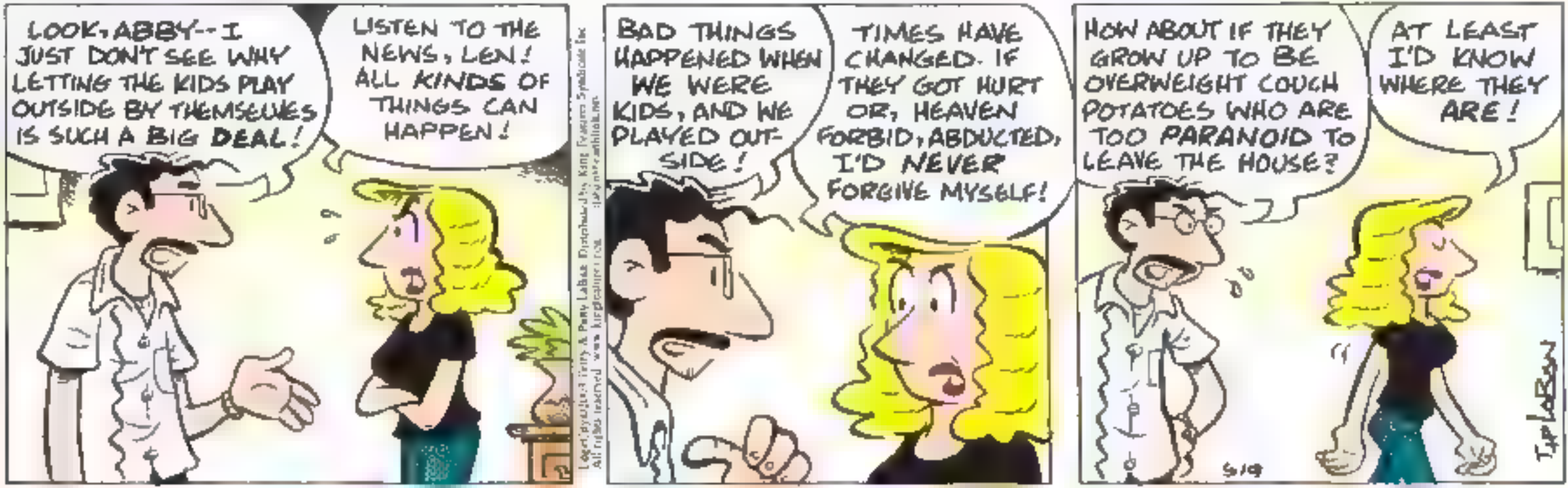
I'M NOT COMING. I HAVE WORK TO DO.
YOU WANT US TO GO OUTSIDE BY OURSELVES?

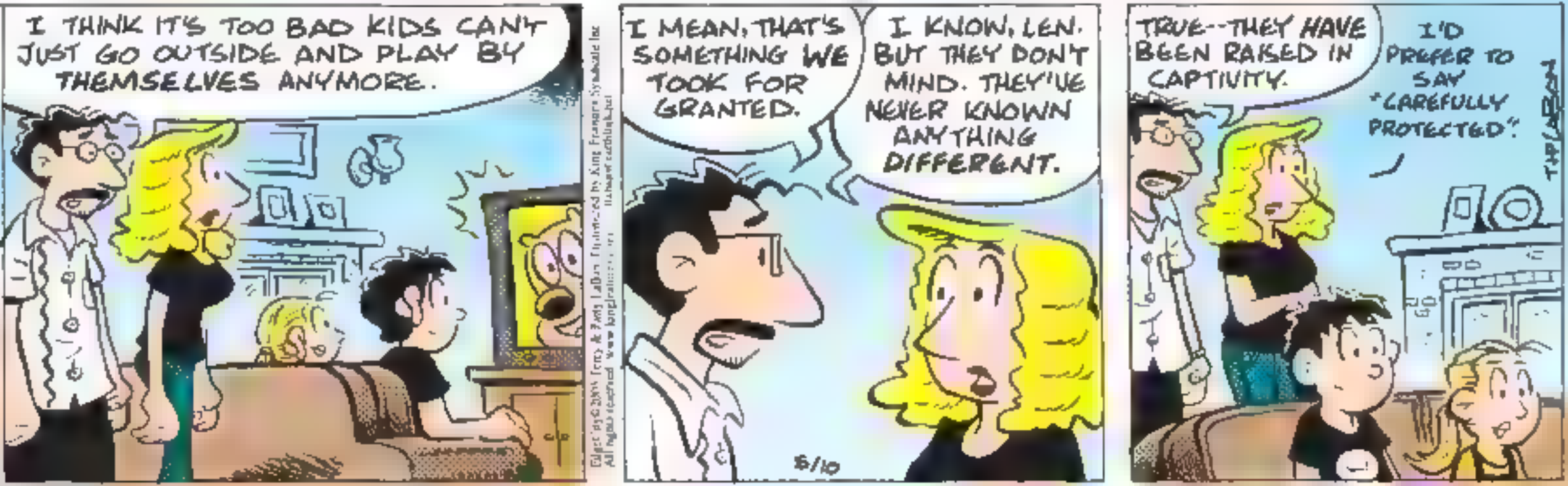

SURE! WHY NOT?
DON'T WATCH THE NEWS MUCH, DO YOU?
RELAX, COLIN-- HE'S OBVIOUSLY KIDDING!

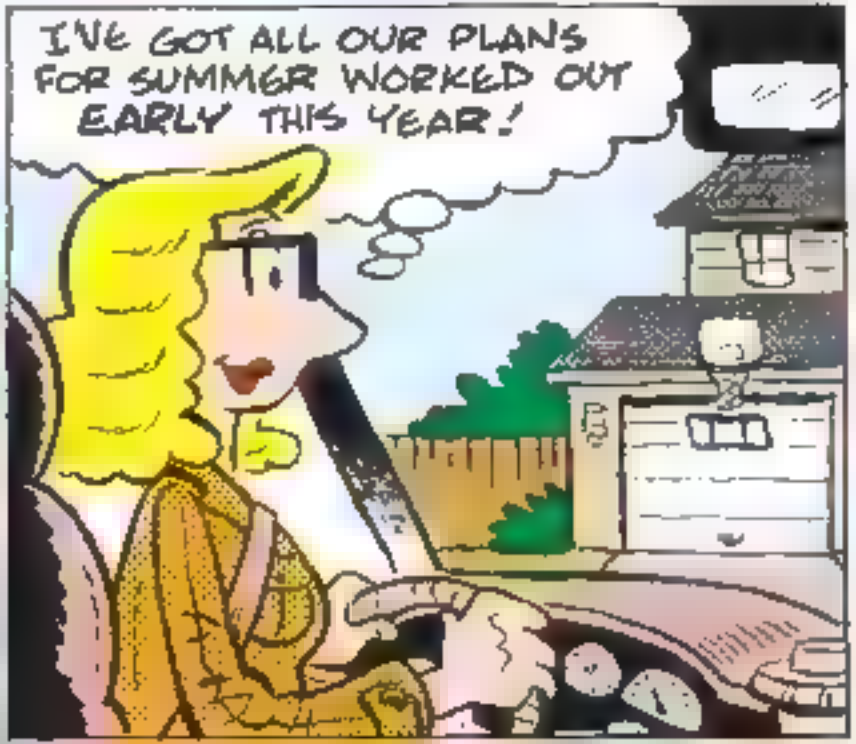

IT'S BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE! WHY DON'T YOU GUYS GO TO THE PARK?
BY OURSELVES?!
WHY NOT? IT'S JUST UP THE STREET. AND THIS IS A SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD!
WOW! THIS IS JUST LIKE THE SKIT WE SAW AT THE ASSEMBLY LAST WEDNESDAY!
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO SAY "NO"!
TOPLABON
5/6

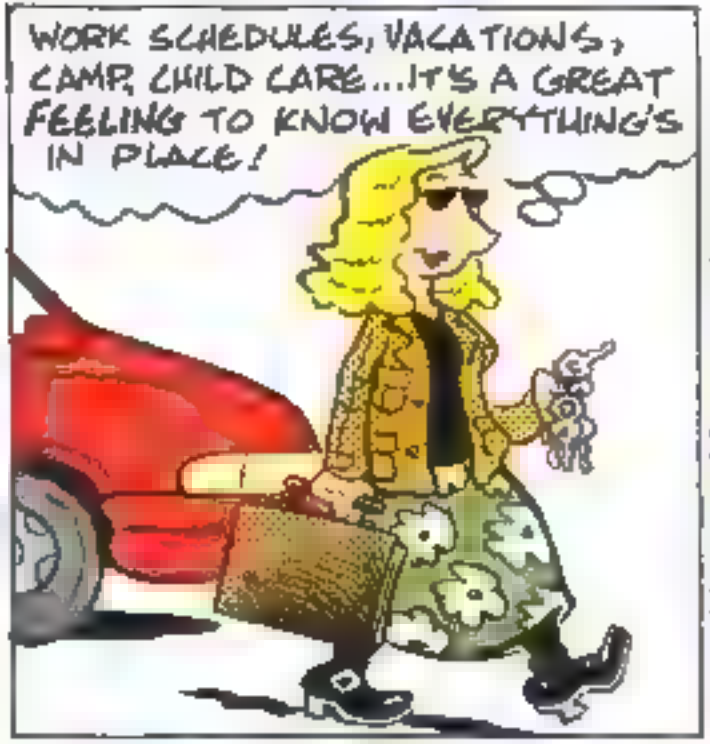

LOOK, I HAVE AN IDEA. YOU GUYS CAN GO UP TO THE PARK BY YOURSELVES AND TAKE THESE WALKIE-TALKIES.
I'M SURE NOTHING WILL HAPPEN, BUT JUST IN CASE, I'LL BE RIGHT HERE IN THE KITCHEN, MONITORING YOU!
DAD, COLIN THREW A WORM AT ME!
WELL, CARLY THREW MUD!
DID NOT!
DID TOO!
TAPLIN
5/7


I TRIED TO GET THE KIDS TO PLAY OUTSIDE TODAY, BUT THEY WERE VERY RESISTANT.
I TOLD THEM THEY COULD GO UP TO THE PARK, BUT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION!
5/8
HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT?
YOU SAID THE KIDS COULD GO TO THE PARK BY THEMSELVES? ARE YOU CRAZY?!


LOOK, ABBY--I JUST DON'T SEE WHY LETTING THE KIDS PLAY OUTSIDE BY THEMSELVES IS SUCH A BIG DEAL!
LISTEN TO THE NEWS, LEN! ALL KINDS OF THINGS CAN HAPPEN!
BAD THINGS HAPPENED WHEN WE WERE KIDS, AND WE PLAYED OUTSIDE!
TIMES HAVE CHANGED. IF THEY GOT HURT OR, HEAVEN FORBID, ABDUCTED, I'D NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF!
HOW ABOUT IF THEY GROW UP TO BE OVERWEIGHT COUCH POTATOES WHO ARE TOO PARANOID TO LEAVE THE HOUSE?
AT LEAST I'D KNOW WHERE THEY ARE!
5/19
TOM LABBOY


I THINK IT'S TOO BAD KIDS CAN'T JUST GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY BY THEMSELVES ANYMORE.
I MEAN, THAT'S SOMETHING WE TOOK FOR GRANTED.
I KNOW, LEN. BUT THEY DON'T MIND. THEY'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYTHING DIFFERENT.
6/10
TRUE--THEY HAVE BEEN RAISED IN CAPTIVITY.
I'D PREFER TO SAY "CAREFULLY PROTECTED".





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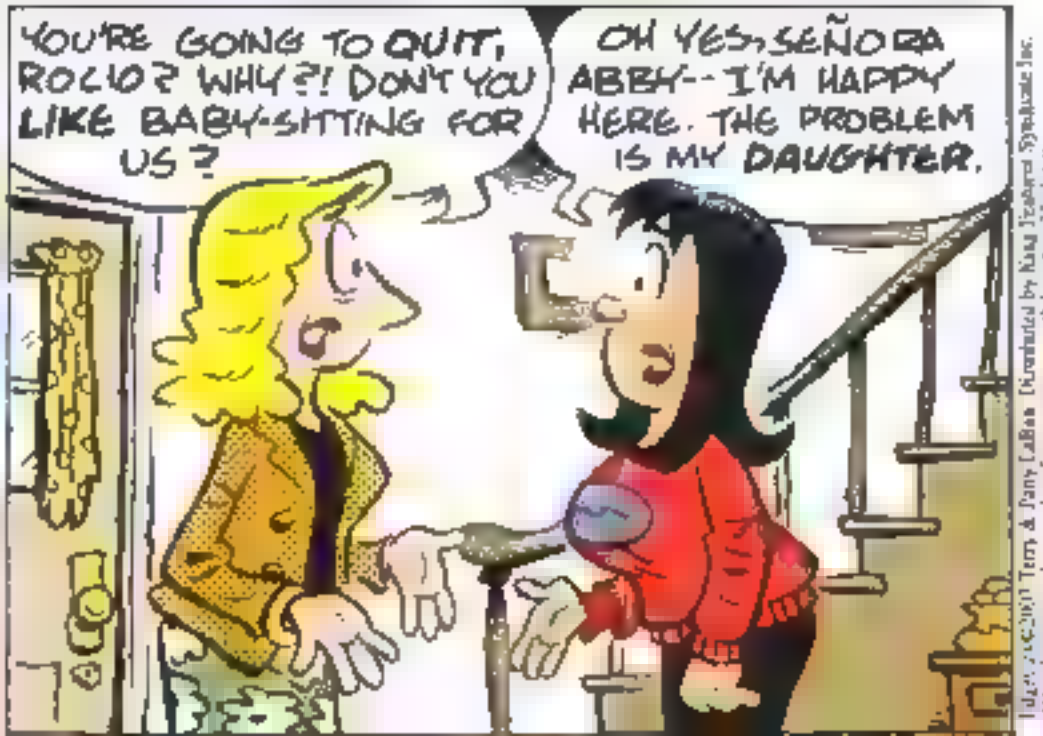
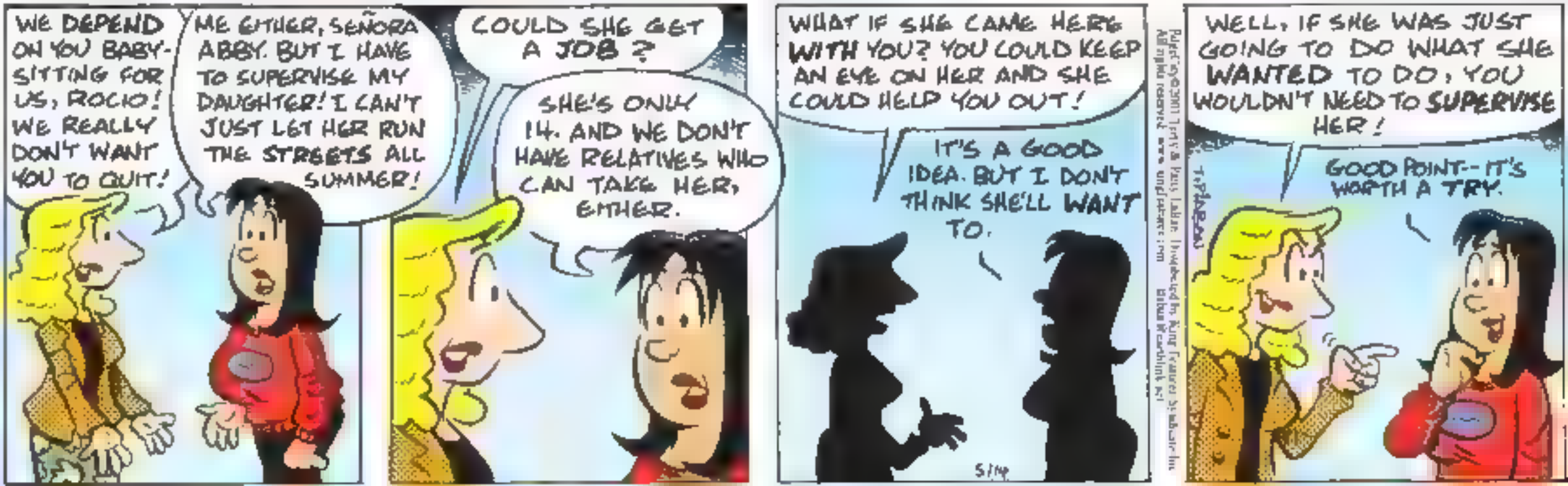
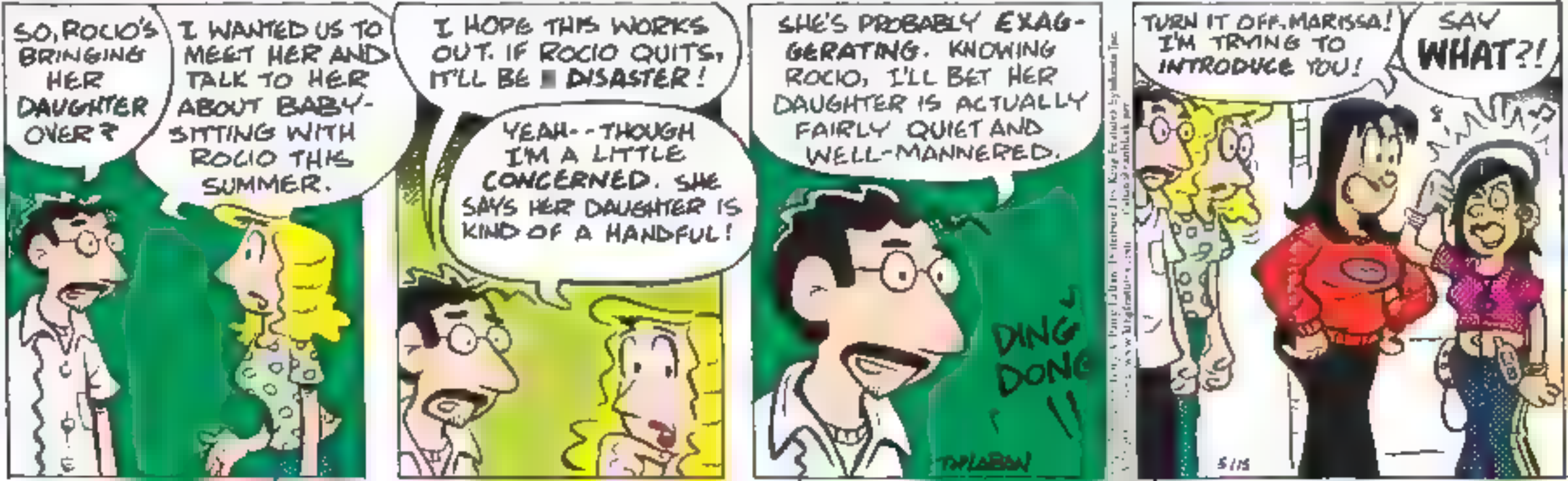
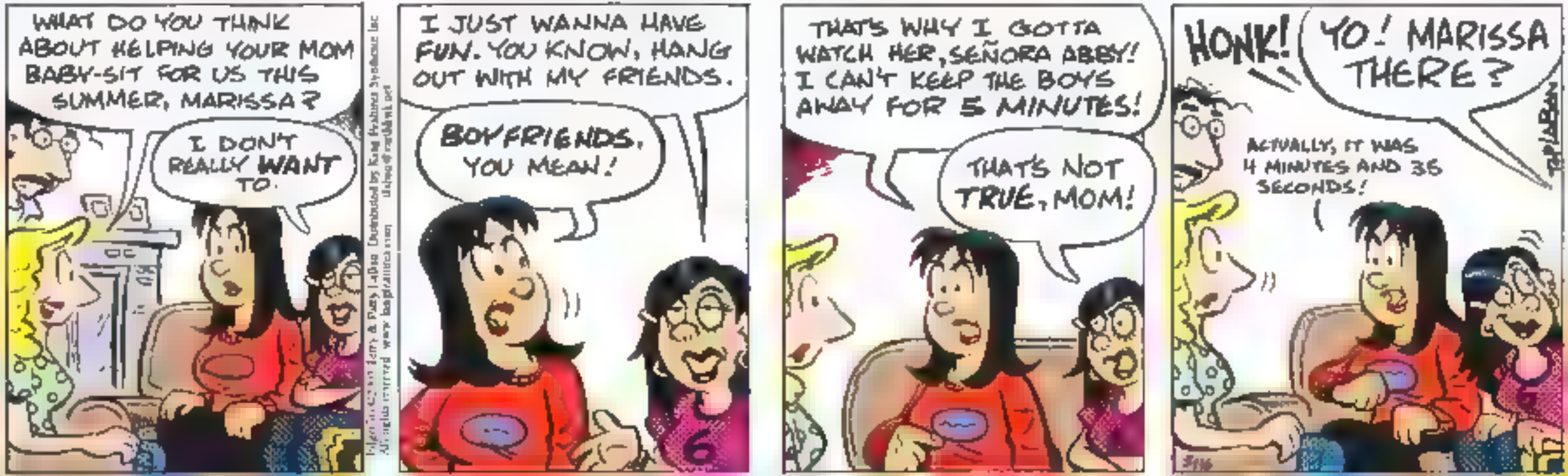

YOU'RE GOING TO QUIT, ROCIO? WHY?! DON'T YOU LIKE BABY-SITTING FOR US?
OH YES, SEÑORA ABBY--I'M HAPPY HERE. THE PROBLEM IS MY DAUGHTER.

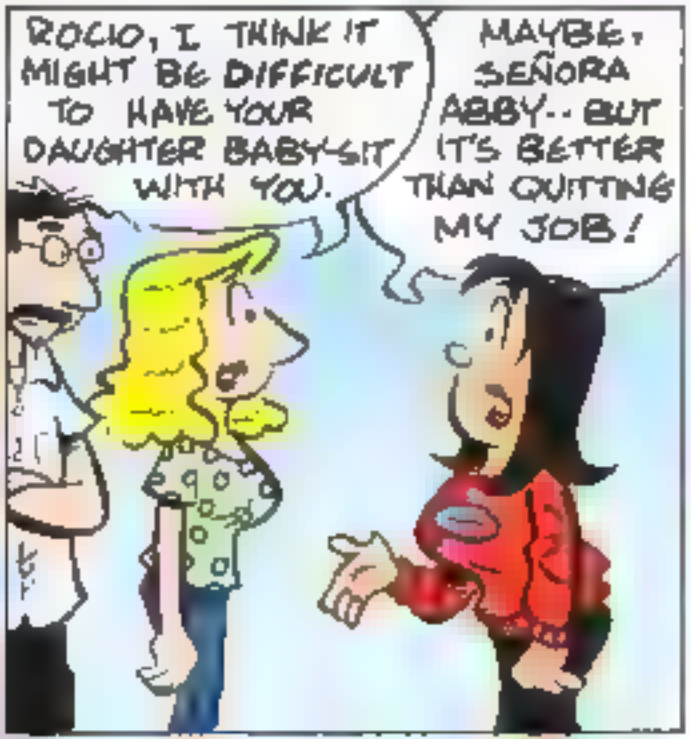
SHE'S HAVING SOME TROUBLES AND I NEED TO SUPERVISE HER WHEN SCHOOL'S OUT THIS SUMMER!
HOW TERRIBLE!

IT'S NOT SO BAD. SHE JUST NEEDS SOME GUIDANCE, THAT'S ALL.
I MEAN FOR US!!


WE DEPEND ON YOU BABY-SITTING FOR US, ROCIO! WE REALLY DON'T WANT YOU TO QUIT!
ME EITHER, SEÑORA ABBY. BUT I HAVE TO SUPERVISE MY DAUGHTER! I CAN'T JUST LET HER RUN THE STREETS ALL SUMMER!
COULD SHE GET A JOB?
SHE'S ONLY 14. AND WE DON'T HAVE RELATIVES WHO CAN TAKE HER, EITHER.
WHAT IF SHE CAME HERE WITH YOU? YOU COULD KEEP AN EYE ON HER AND SHE COULD HELP YOU OUT!
IT'S A GOOD IDEA. BUT I DON'T THINK SHE'LL WANT TO.
WELL, IF SHE WAS JUST GOING TO DO WHAT SHE WANTED TO DO, YOU WOULDN'T NEED TO SUPERVISE HER!
GOOD POINT-- IT'S WORTH A TRY.


SO, ROCIO'S BRINGING HER DAUGHTER OVER?
I WANTED US TO MEET HER AND TALK TO HER ABOUT BABY-SITTING WITH ROCIO THIS SUMMER.
I HOPE THIS WORKS OUT. IF ROCIO QUITS, IT'LL BE A DISASTER!
YEAH--THOUGH I'M A LITTLE CONCERNED. SHE SAYS HER DAUGHTER IS KIND OF A HANDFUL!
SHE'S PROBABLY EXAGGERATING. KNOWING ROCIO, I'LL BET HER DAUGHTER IS ACTUALLY FAIRLY QUIET AND WELL-MANNERED.
DING DONG
TAYLOR
TURN IT OFF, MARISSA! I'M TRYING TO INTRODUCE YOU!
SAY WHAT?!
5/15


WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HELPING YOUR MOM BABY-SIT FOR US THIS SUMMER, MARISSA?
I DON'T REALLY WANT TO.
I JUST WANNA HAVE FUN. YOU KNOW, HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS.
BOYFRIENDS, YOU MEAN!
THAT'S WHY I GOTTA WATCH HER, SEÑORA ABBY! I CAN'T KEEP THE BOYS AWAY FOR 5 MINUTES!
THAT'S NOT TRUE, MOM!
HONK!
YO! MARISSA THERE?
ACTUALLY, IT WAS 4 MINUTES AND 35 SECONDS!



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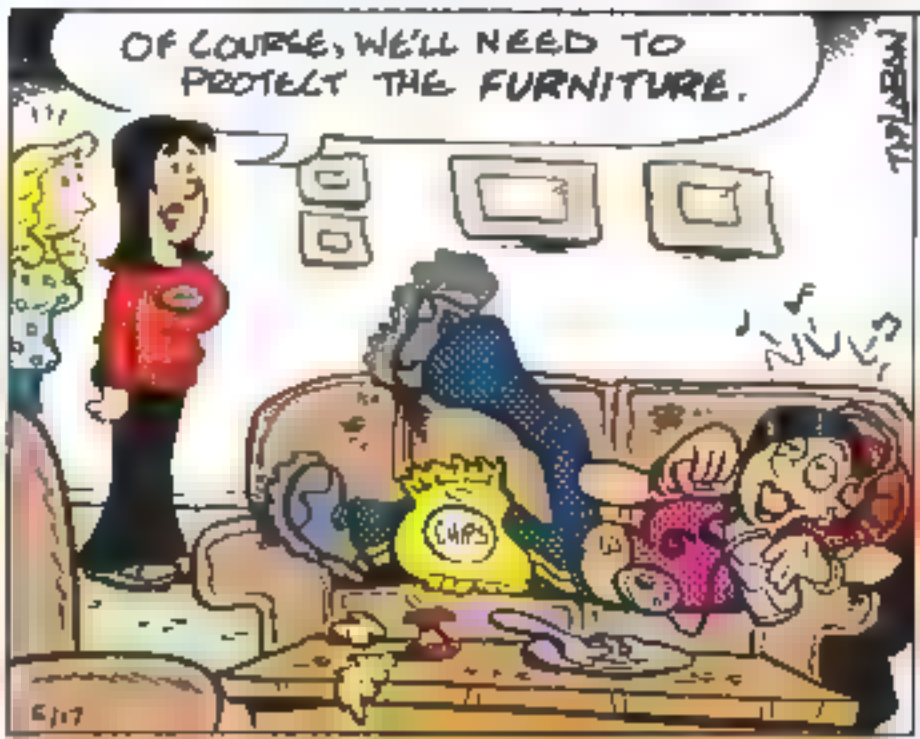
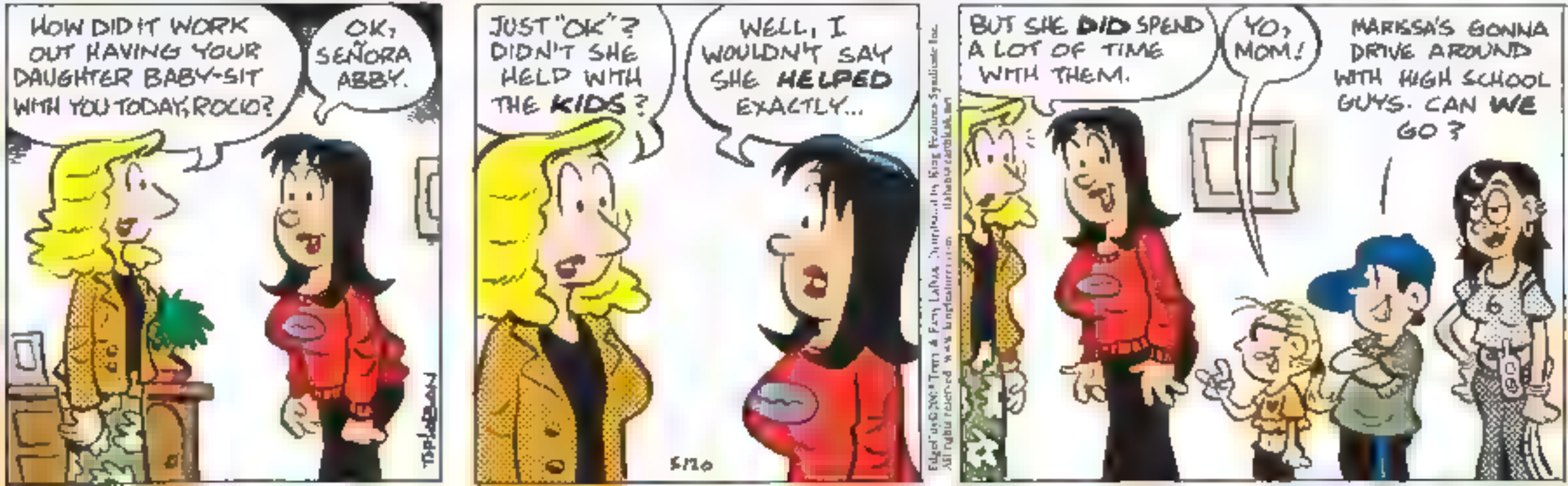
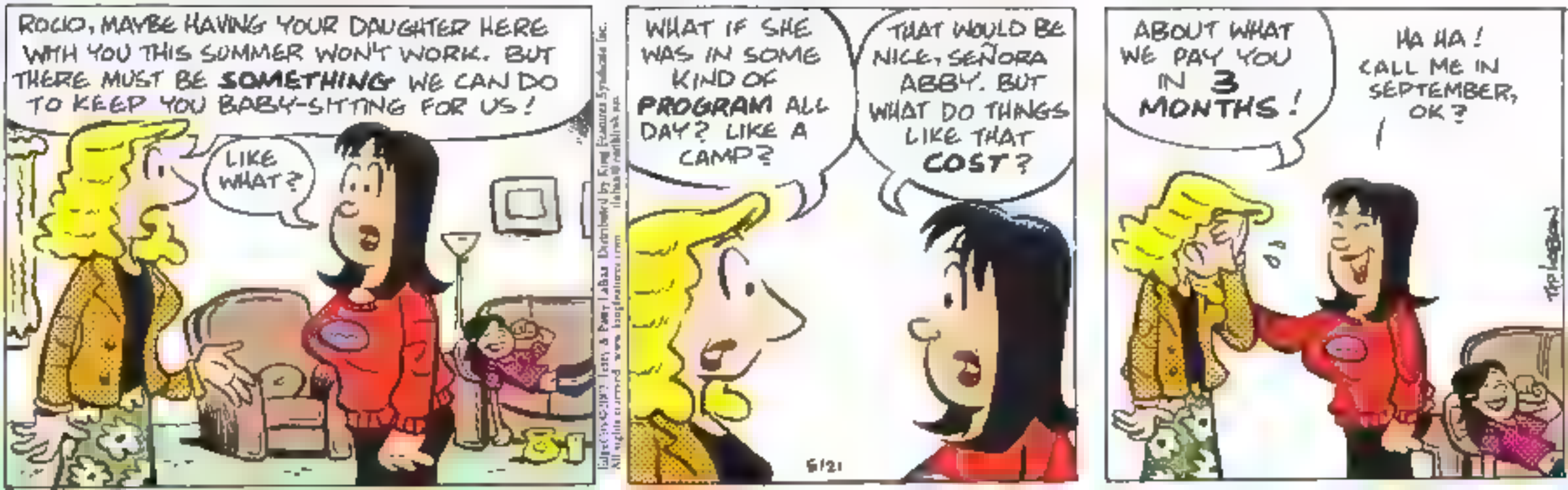
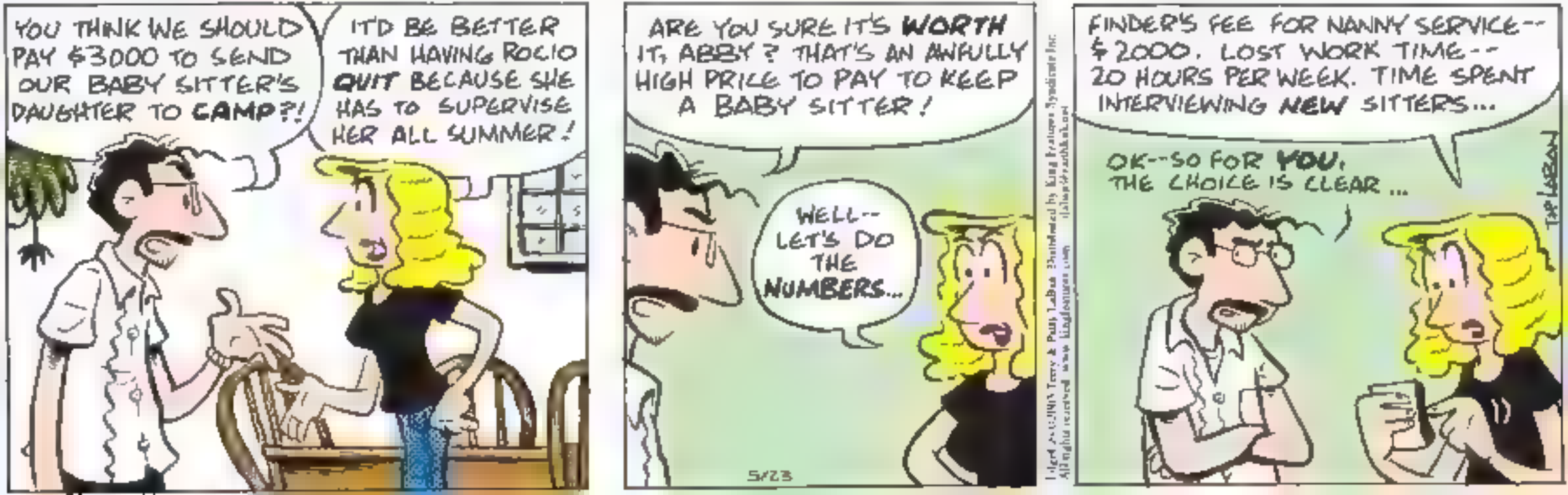


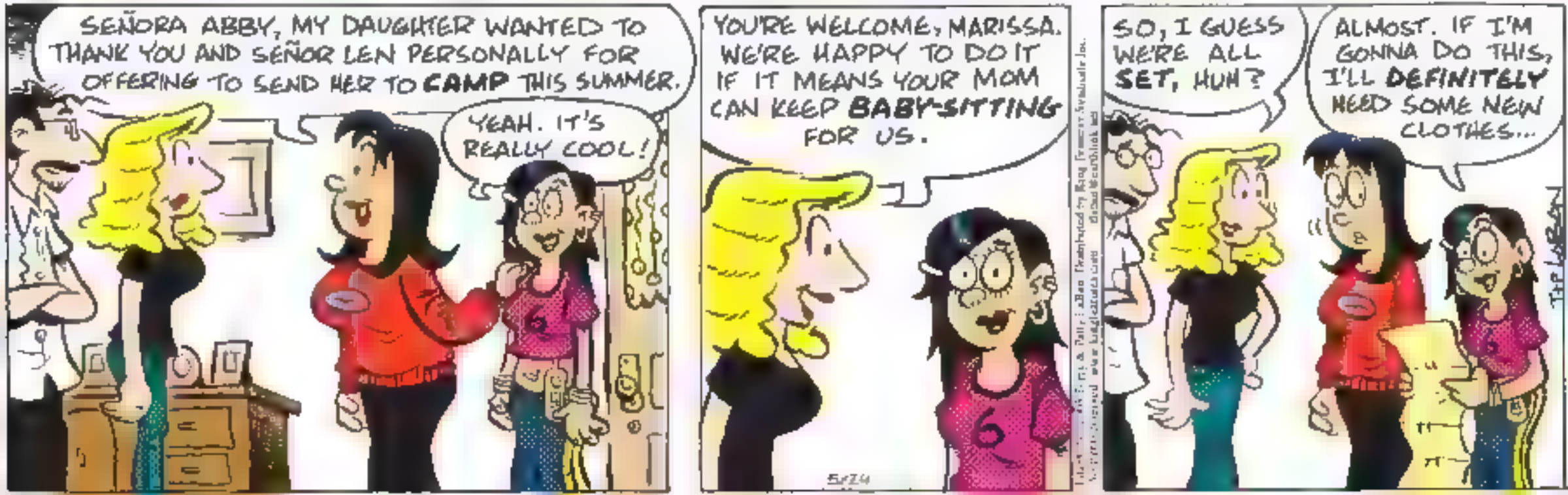
ANYTHING WRONG, ABBY?
OUR BABY SITTER'S TEENAGE DAUGHTER DIDN'T HAVE SCHOOL TODAY, SO SHE CAME TO OUR HOUSE. I WANT TO SEE HOW IT'S GOING!
I'VE CALLED 4 TIMES THIS AFTERNOON AND I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET THROUGH!
I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING WHEN I GET THERE!
SORRY, SEÑORA ABBY-- MARISSA'S CELL PHONE DIED.

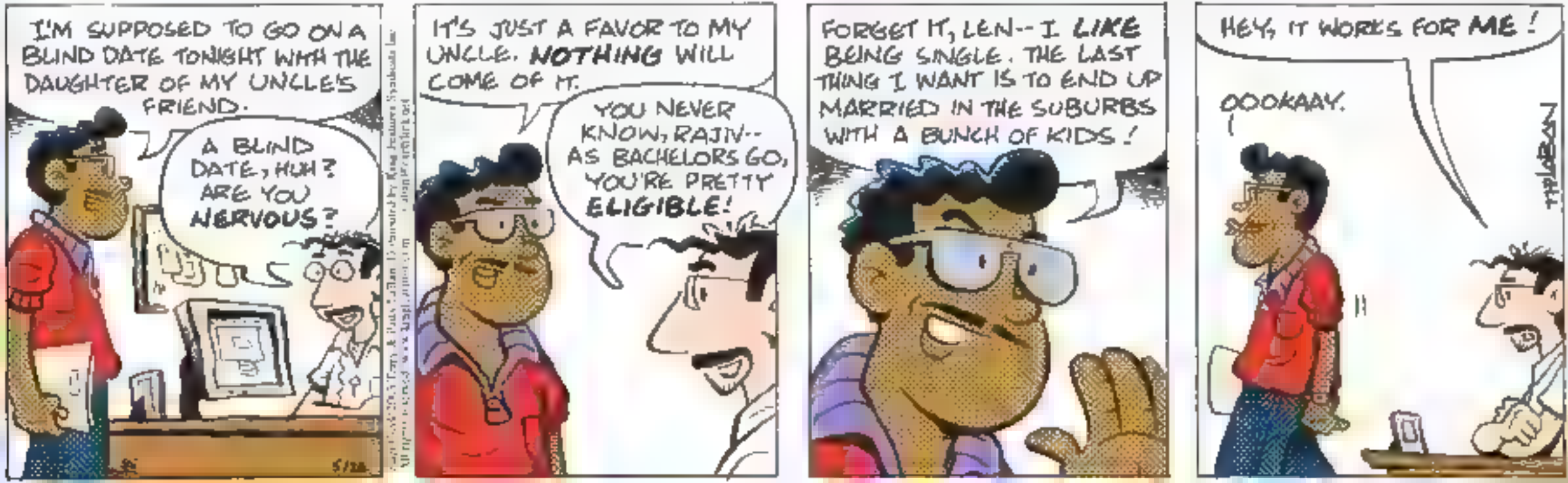

HOW DID IT WORK OUT HAVING YOUR DAUGHTER BABY-SIT WITH YOU TODAY, ROCIO?
OK, SEÑORA ABBY.
JUST "OK"? DIDN'T SHE HELP WITH THE KIDS?
WELL, I WOULDN'T SAY SHE HELPED EXACTLY...
BUT SHE DID SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH THEM.
YO, MOM!
MARISSA'S GONNA DRIVE AROUND WITH HIGH SCHOOL GUYS. CAN WE GO?

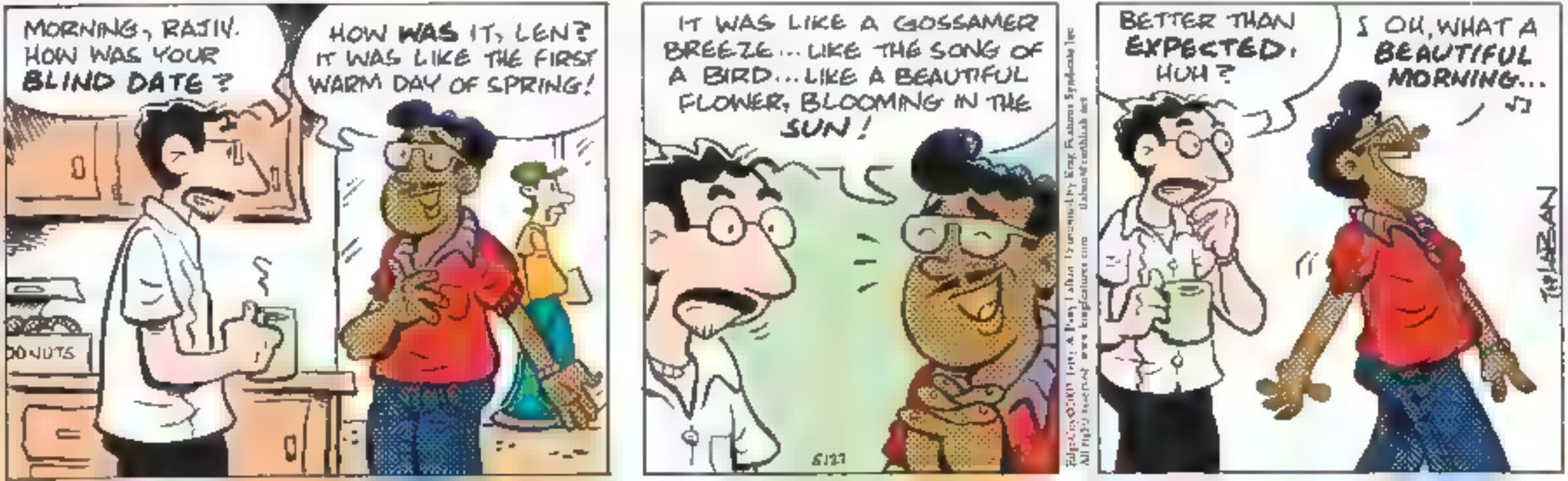

ROCIO, MAYBE HAVING YOUR DAUGHTER HERE WITH YOU THIS SUMMER WON'T WORK. BUT THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO TO KEEP YOU BABY-SITTING FOR US!
LIKE WHAT?
WHAT IF SHE WAS IN SOME KIND OF PROGRAM ALL DAY? LIKE A CAMP?
THAT WOULD BE NICE, SEÑORA ABBY. BUT WHAT DO THINGS LIKE THAT COST?
6/21
ABOUT WHAT WE PAY YOU IN 3 MONTHS!
HA HA! CALL ME IN SEPTEMBER, OK?

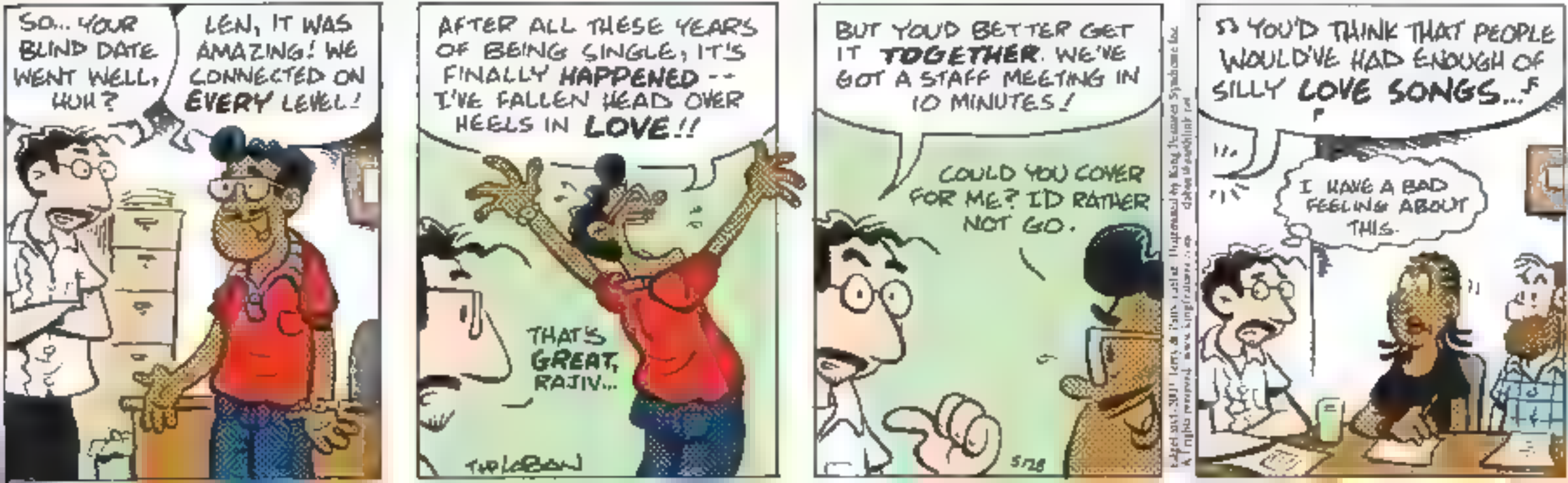
HEY, LEN--I'VE BEEN THINKING--MAYBE WE SHOULD SEND ROCIO'S DAUGHTER TO CAMP SO ROCIO WON'T HAVE TO QUIT BABY-SITTING FOR US THIS SUMMER.
I DON'T KNOW, ABBY...
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A TOUGH TEEN LIKE THAT GETTING INTO ARCHERY AND ARTS AND CRAFTS!
WHAT ABOUT DJ-ING, HIP HOP DANCE, AND ADVANCED RHYME?
5/22
YOU MEAN THERE'S A RAP CAMP? WHO KNEW?
YEAH--AND IT ONLY COSTS $3000!
CAMP RAP-A-WAY
TAYLOR-BAN

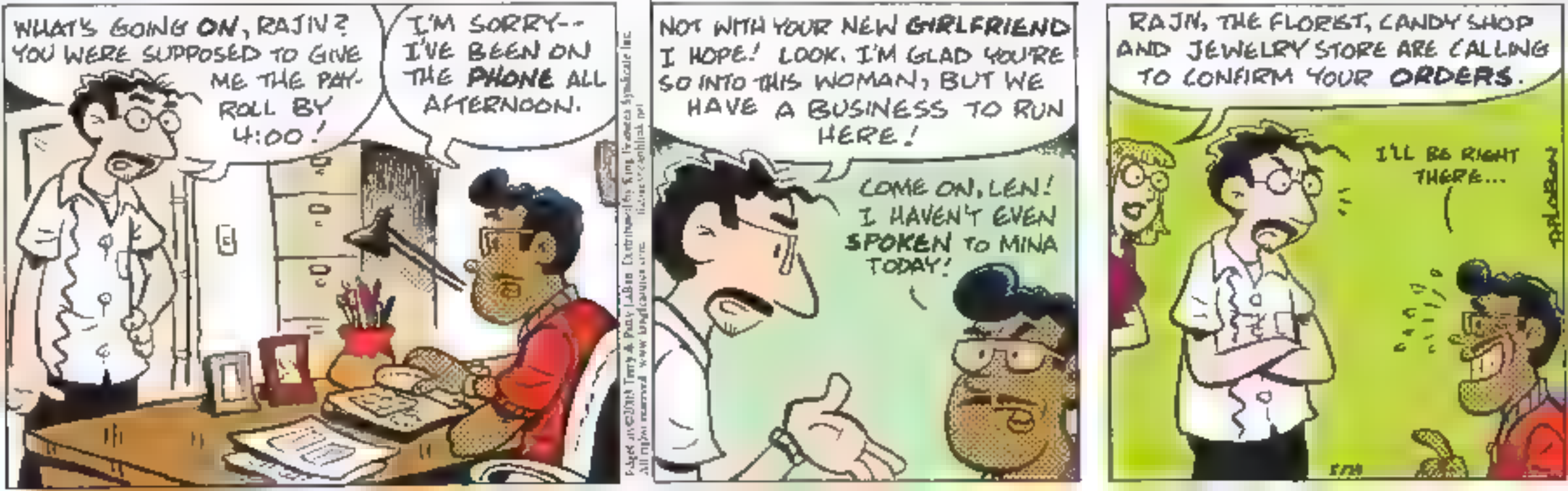

YOU THINK WE SHOULD PAY $3000 TO SEND OUR BABY SITTER'S DAUGHTER TO CAMP?!
IT'D BE BETTER THAN HAVING ROCIO QUIT BECAUSE SHE HAS TO SUPERVISE HER ALL SUMMER!
ARE YOU SURE IT'S WORTH IT, ABBY? THAT'S AN AWFULLY HIGH PRICE TO PAY TO KEEP A BABY SITTER!
WELL-- LET'S DO THE NUMBERS...
5/23
FINDER'S FEE FOR NANNY SERVICE-- $2000. LOST WORK TIME-- 20 HOURS PER WEEK. TIME SPENT INTERVIEWING NEW SITTERS...
OK--SO FOR YOU, THE CHOICE IS CLEAR...
TOM LAZAR


SEÑORA ABBY, MY DAUGHTER WANTED TO THANK YOU AND SEÑOR LEN PERSONALLY FOR OFFERING TO SEND HER TO CAMP THIS SUMMER.
YEAH. IT'S REALLY COOL!
YOU'RE WELCOME, MARISSA. WE'RE HAPPY TO DO IT IF IT MEANS YOUR MOM CAN KEEP BABY-SITTING FOR US.
SO, I GUESS WE'RE ALL SET, HUH?
ALMOST. IF I'M GONNA DO THIS, I'LL DEFINITELY NEED SOME NEW CLOTHES...

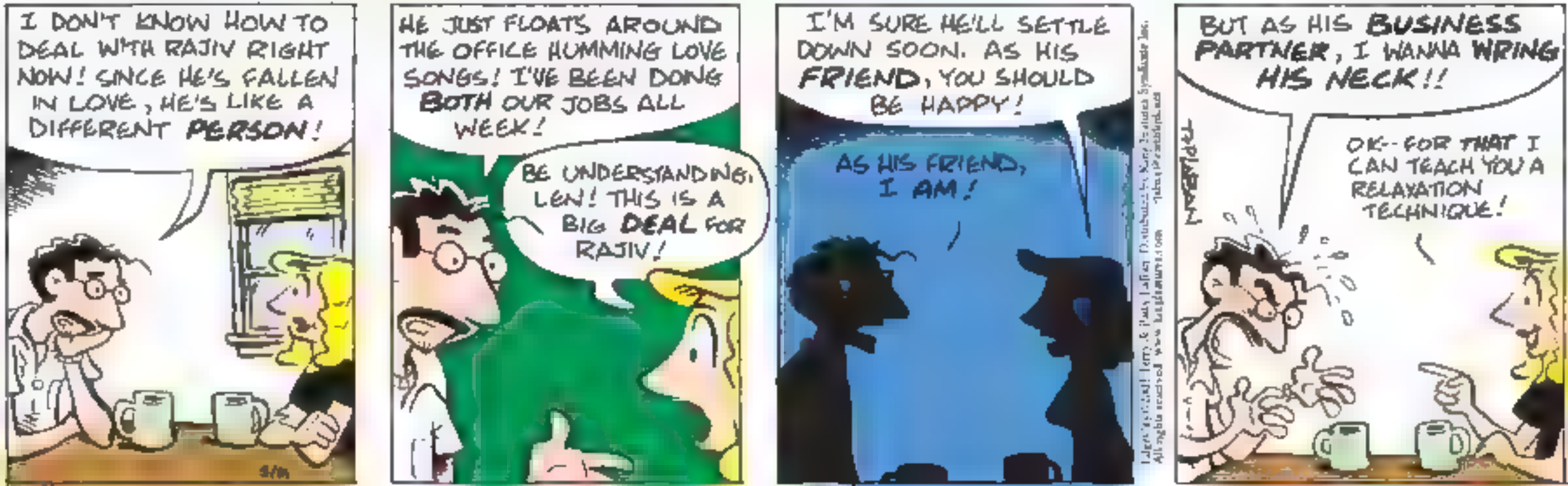

I'M SUPPOSED TO GO ON A BLIND DATE TONIGHT WITH THE DAUGHTER OF MY UNCLE'S FRIEND.
A BLIND DATE, HUH? ARE YOU NERVOUS?
IT'S JUST A FAVOR TO MY UNCLE. NOTHING WILL COME OF IT.
YOU NEVER KNOW, RAJIV-- AS BACHELORS GO, YOU'RE PRETTY ELIGIBLE!
FORGET IT, LEN-- I LIKE BEING SINGLE. THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO END UP MARRIED IN THE SUBURBS WITH A BUNCH OF KIDS!
HEY, IT WORKS FOR ME!
OOOKAAY.

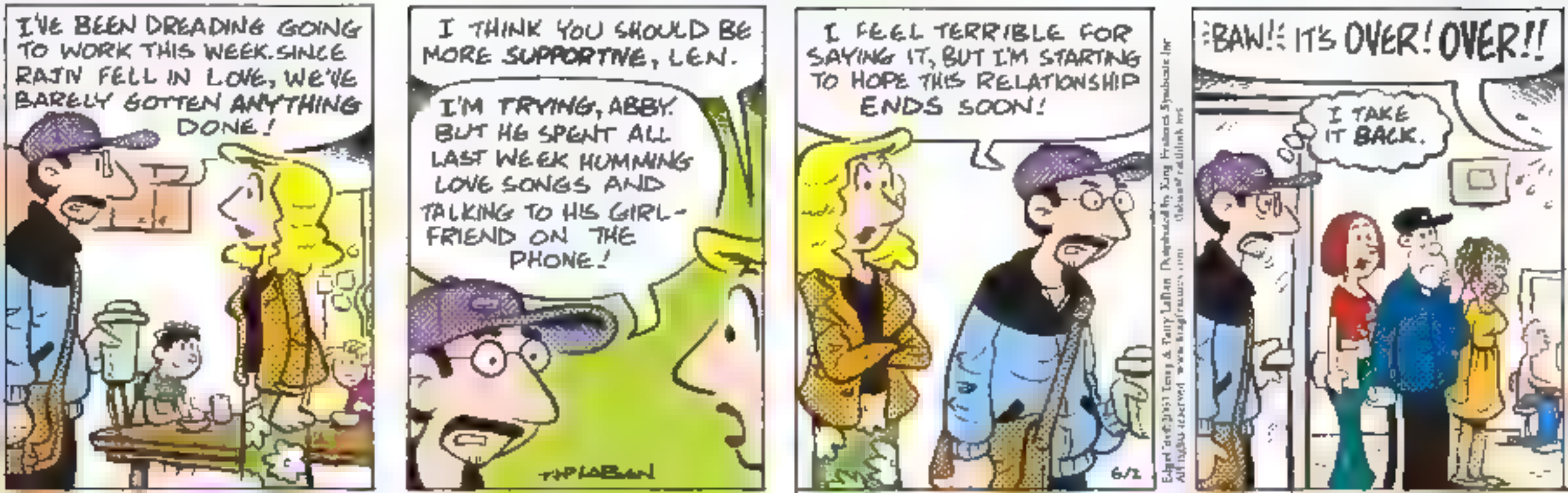

MORNING, RAJIV. HOW WAS YOUR BLIND DATE?
HOW WAS IT, LEN? IT WAS LIKE THE FIRST WARM DAY OF SPRING!
DONUTS
IT WAS LIKE A GOSSAMER BREEZE... LIKE THE SONG OF A BIRD... LIKE A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER, BLOOMING IN THE SUN!
BETTER THAN EXPECTED, HUH?
♪ OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING... ♪
TOLARIAN

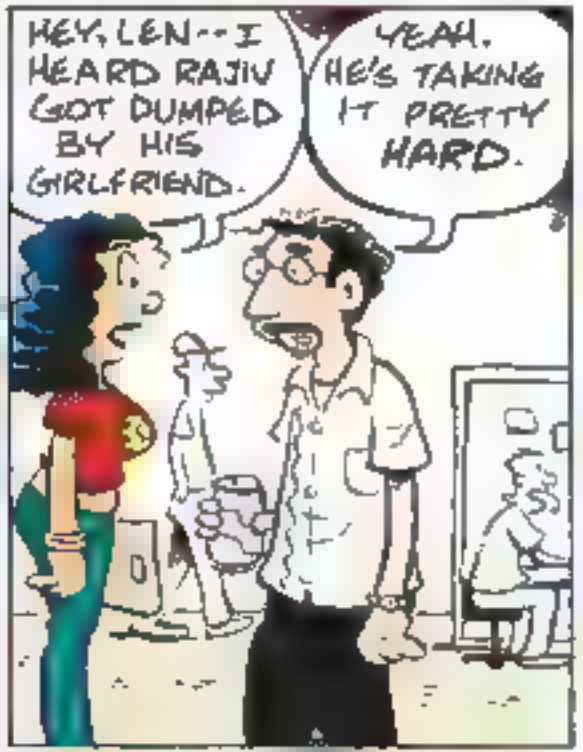

SO... YOUR BLIND DATE WENT WELL, HUH?
LEN, IT WAS AMAZING! WE CONNECTED ON EVERY LEVEL!
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF BEING SINGLE, IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED -- I'VE FALLEN HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE!!
THAT'S GREAT, RAJIV...
BUT YOU'D BETTER GET IT TOGETHER. WE'VE GOT A STAFF MEETING IN 10 MINUTES!
COULD YOU COVER FOR ME? I'D RATHER NOT GO.
YOU'D THINK THAT PEOPLE WOULD'VE HAD ENOUGH OF SILLY LOVE SONGS...
I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.


WHAT'S GOING ON, RAJIV? YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO GIVE ME THE PAYROLL BY 4:00!
I'M SORRY-- I'VE BEEN ON THE PHONE ALL AFTERNOON.
NOT WITH YOUR NEW GIRLFRIEND I HOPE! LOOK, I'M GLAD YOU'RE SO INTO THIS WOMAN, BUT WE HAVE A BUSINESS TO RUN HERE!
COME ON, LEN! I HAVEN'T EVEN SPOKEN TO MINA TODAY!
RAJIV, THE FLORIST, CANDY SHOP AND JEWELRY STORE ARE CALLING TO CONFIRM YOUR ORDERS.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE...

RAJIV, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET WITH A CLIENT AT 3:00!
SORRY. I'VE BEEN ON THE PHONE WITH MINA.
AGAIN? LOOK, YOUR PERSONAL LIFE ISN'T MY CONCERN, BUT IT'S STARTING TO AFFECT OUR BUSINESS!
RELAX, LEN--IT'LL BE OK.
5/30
I HOPE SO. BUT IT DOES SEEM LIKE THIS RELATIONSHIP IS MOVING AWFULLY FAST. I'D HATE TO SEE ANYONE GET HURT!
HEY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!
ACTUALLY, I'M WORRIED ABOUT ME!
LEN, YOUR CLIENT JUST LEFT!
HELLO? MINA?


I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH RAJIV RIGHT NOW! SINCE HE'S FALLEN IN LOVE, HE'S LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON!
HE JUST FLOATS AROUND THE OFFICE HUMMING LOVE SONGS! I'VE BEEN DOING BOTH OUR JOBS ALL WEEK!
BE UNDERSTANDING, LEN! THIS IS A BIG DEAL FOR RAJIV!
I'M SURE HE'LL SETTLE DOWN SOON. AS HIS FRIEND, YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY!
AS HIS FRIEND, I AM!
BUT AS HIS BUSINESS PARTNER, I WANNA WRING HIS NECK!!
OK-- FOR THAT I CAN TEACH YOU A RELAXATION TECHNIQUE!


I'VE BEEN DREADING GOING TO WORK THIS WEEK. SINCE RAJIV FELL IN LOVE, WE'VE BARELY GOTTEN ANYTHING DONE!
I THINK YOU SHOULD BE MORE SUPPORTIVE, LEN.
I'M TRYING, ABBY. BUT HE SPENT ALL LAST WEEK HUMMING LOVE SONGS AND TALKING TO HIS GIRL-FRIEND ON THE PHONE!
THP LABAN
I FEEL TERRIBLE FOR SAYING IT, BUT I'M STARTING TO HOPE THIS RELATIONSHIP ENDS SOON!
6/2
BAW!! IT'S OVER! OVER!!
I TAKE IT BACK.



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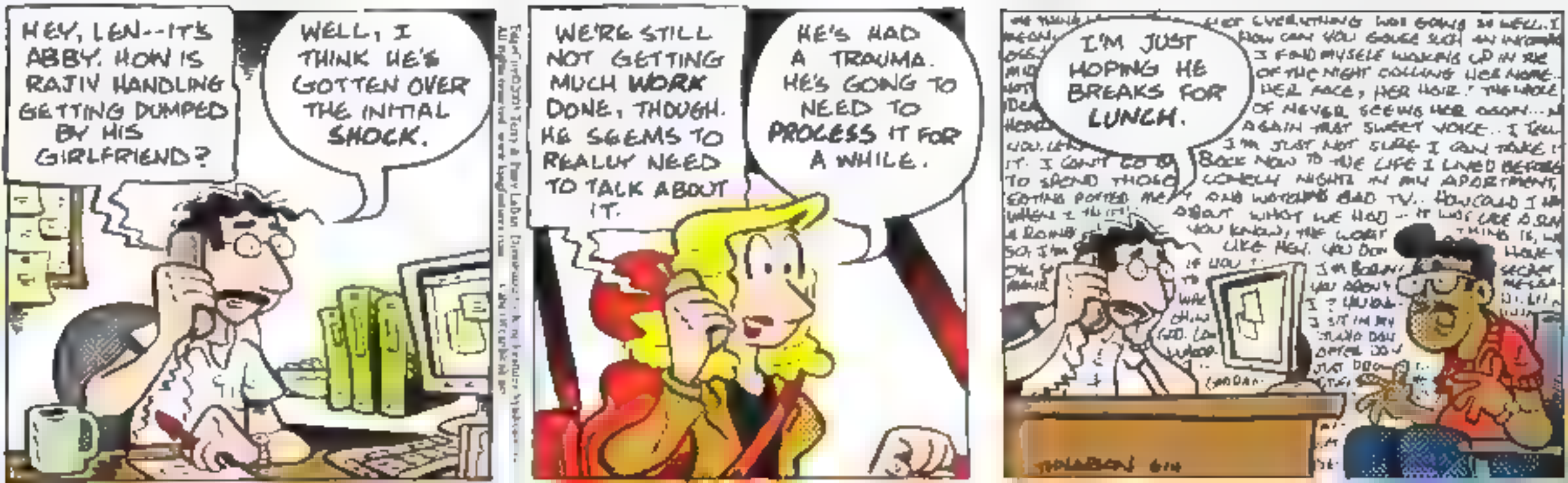
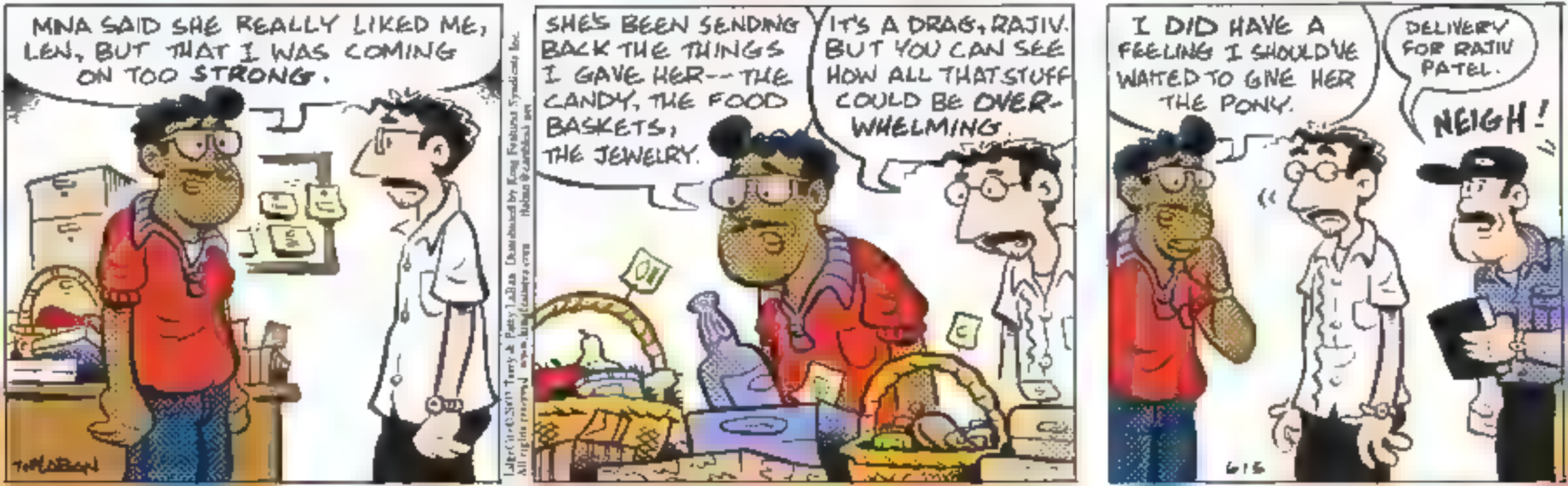
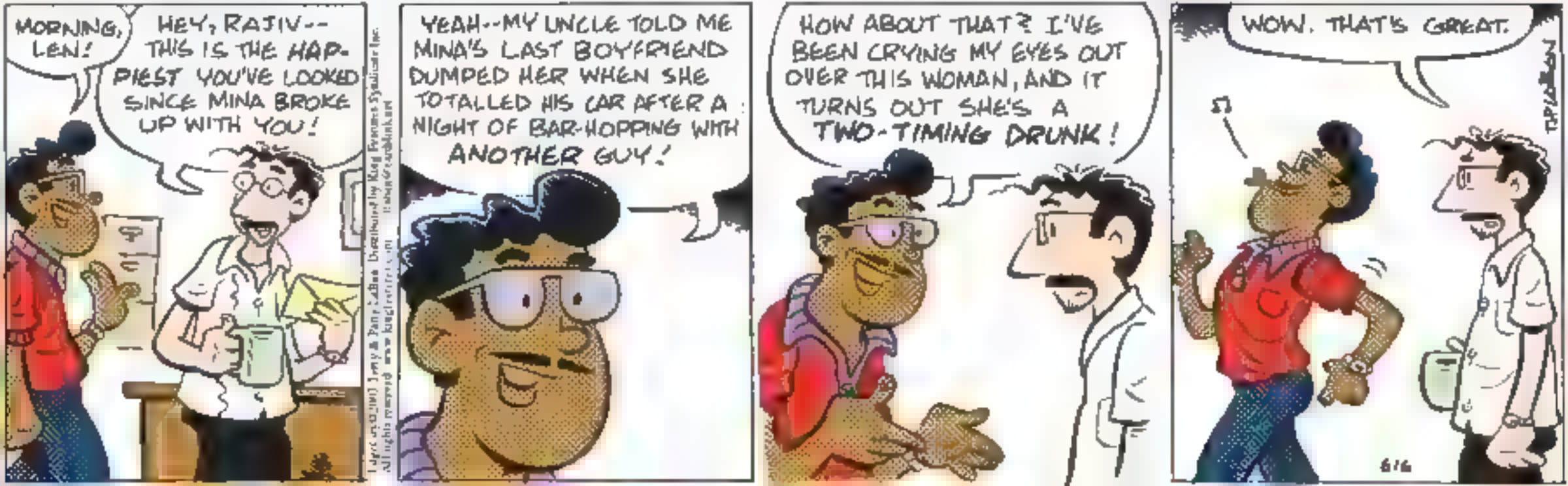

HEY, LEN--IT'S ABBY. HOW IS RAJIV HANDLING GETTING DUMPED BY HIS GIRLFRIEND?
WELL, I THINK HE'S GOTTEN OVER THE INITIAL SHOCK.
WE'RE STILL NOT GETTING MUCH WORK DONE, THOUGH. HE SEEMS TO REALLY NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT.
HE'S HAD A TRAUMA. HE'S GOING TO NEED TO PROCESS IT FOR A WHILE.
I'M JUST HOPING HE BREAKS FOR LUNCH.


MNA SAID SHE REALLY LIKED ME, LEN, BUT THAT I WAS COMING ON TOO STRONG.
SHE'S BEEN SENDING BACK THE THINGS I GAVE HER -- THE CANDY, THE FOOD BASKETS, THE JEWELRY.
IT'S A DRAG, RAJIV. BUT YOU CAN SEE HOW ALL THAT STUFF COULD BE OVER-WHELMING.
I DID HAVE A FEELING I SHOULD'VE WAITED TO GIVE HER THE PONY.
DELIVERY FOR RAJIV PATEL.
NEIGH!


MORNING, LEN!
HEY, RAJIV-- THIS IS THE HAPPIEST YOU'VE LOOKED SINCE MINA BROKE UP WITH YOU!
YEAH--MY UNCLE TOLD ME MINA'S LAST BOYFRIEND DUMPED HER WHEN SHE TOTALLED HIS CAR AFTER A NIGHT OF BAR-HOPPING WITH ANOTHER GUY!
HOW ABOUT THAT? I'VE BEEN CRYING MY EYES OUT OVER THIS WOMAN, AND IT TURNS OUT SHE'S A TWO-TIMING DRUNK!
WOW. THAT'S GREAT.

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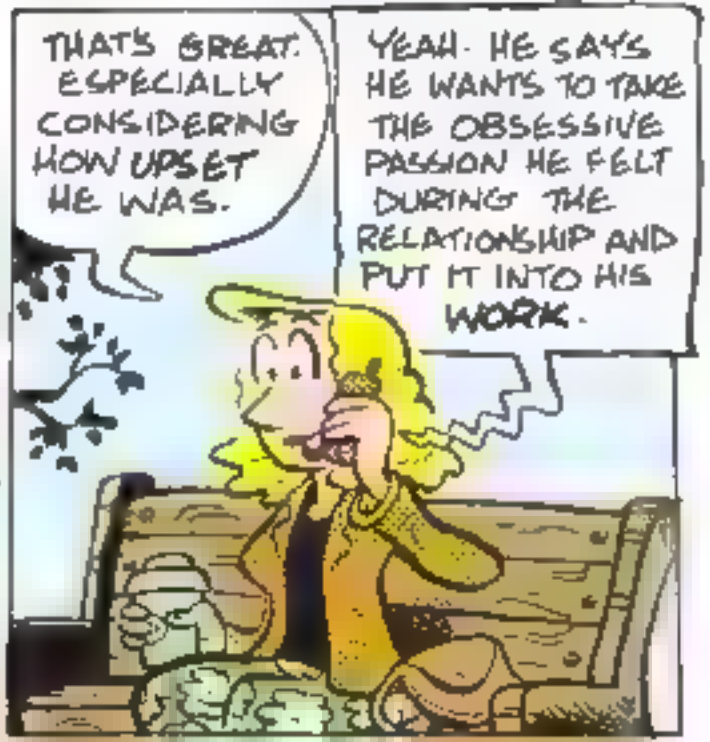

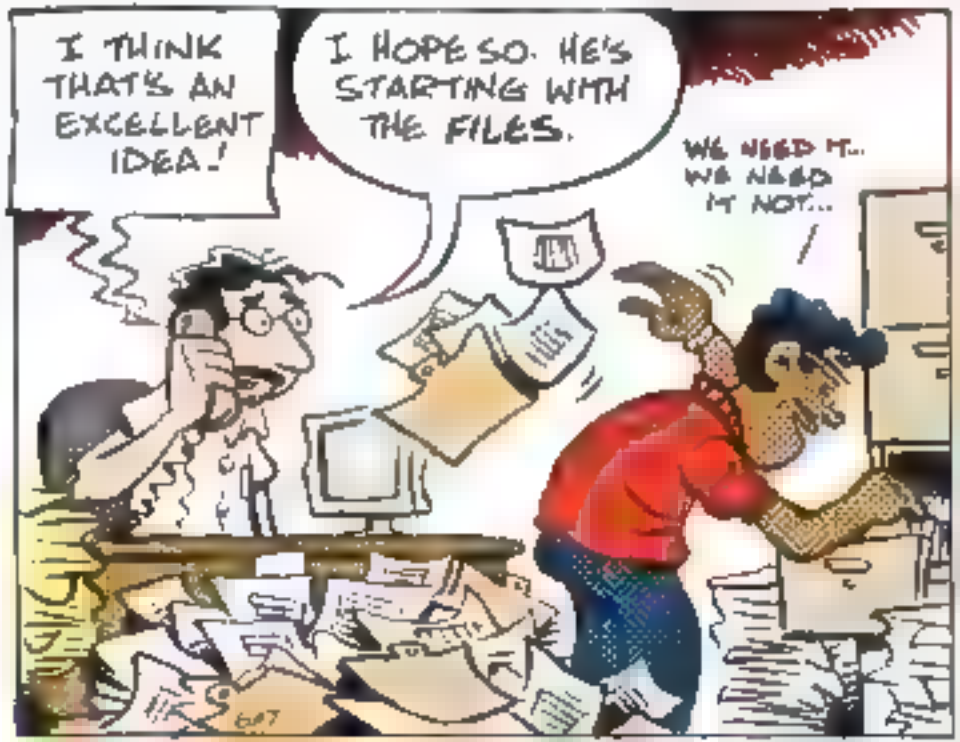

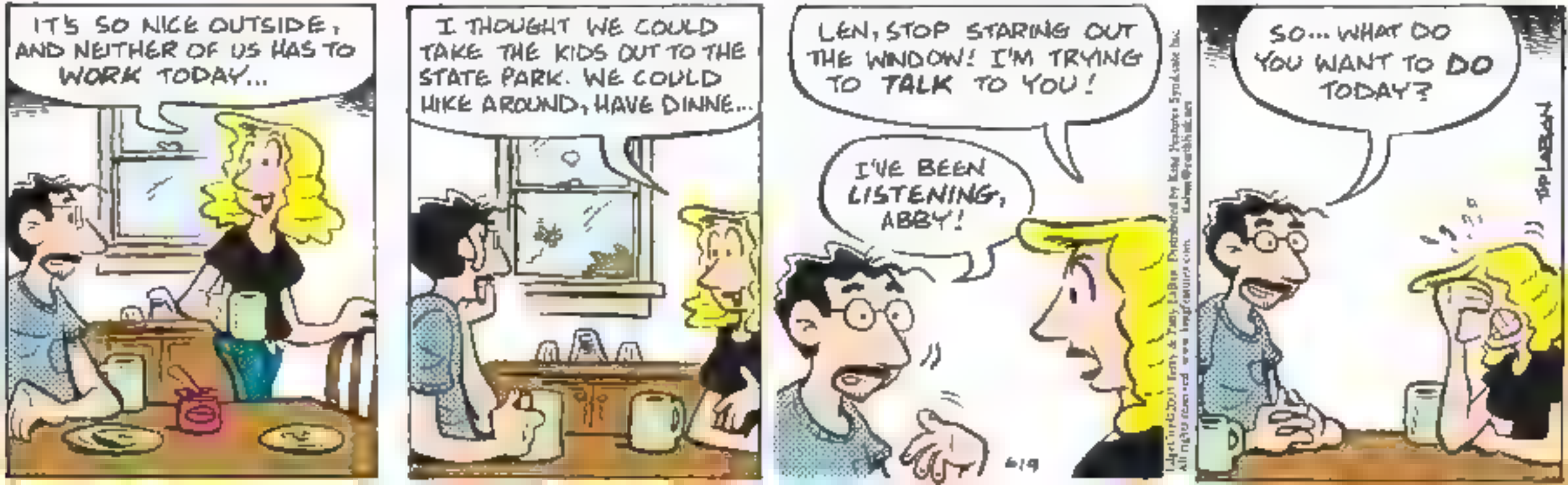
IT'S SO NICE OUTSIDE, AND NEITHER OF US HAS TO WORK TODAY...
I THOUGHT WE COULD TAKE THE KIDS OUT TO THE STATE PARK. WE COULD HIKE AROUND, HAVE DINNE...
LEN, STOP STARING OUT THE WINDOW! I'M TRYING TO TALK TO YOU!
I'VE BEEN LISTENING, ABBY!
SO... WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TODAY?
TOP LABRAN

YOU KNOW, LEN--IT REALLY BUGS ME THE WAY YOU LET YOUR MIND WANDER!
HALF THE TIME I ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING, YOU END UP DOING SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!
OH, I DO NOT!
WELL, IF WE WANT TO GO TO THE STATE PARK, WE NEED TO LEAVE SOON. I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU GOT READY.
JUST GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES.
HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR FATHER?

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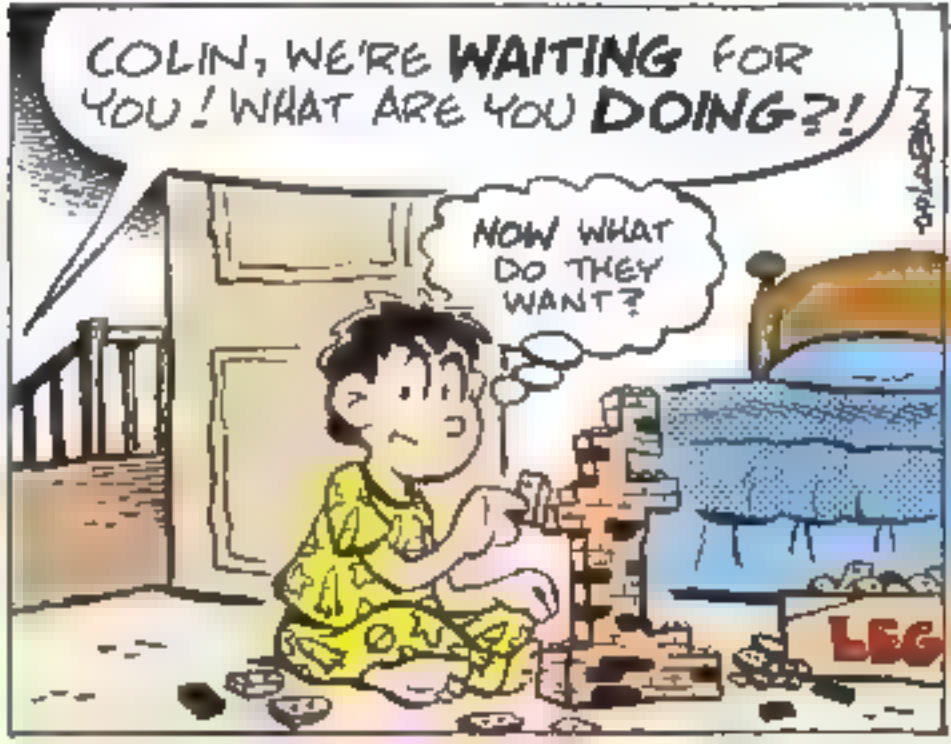
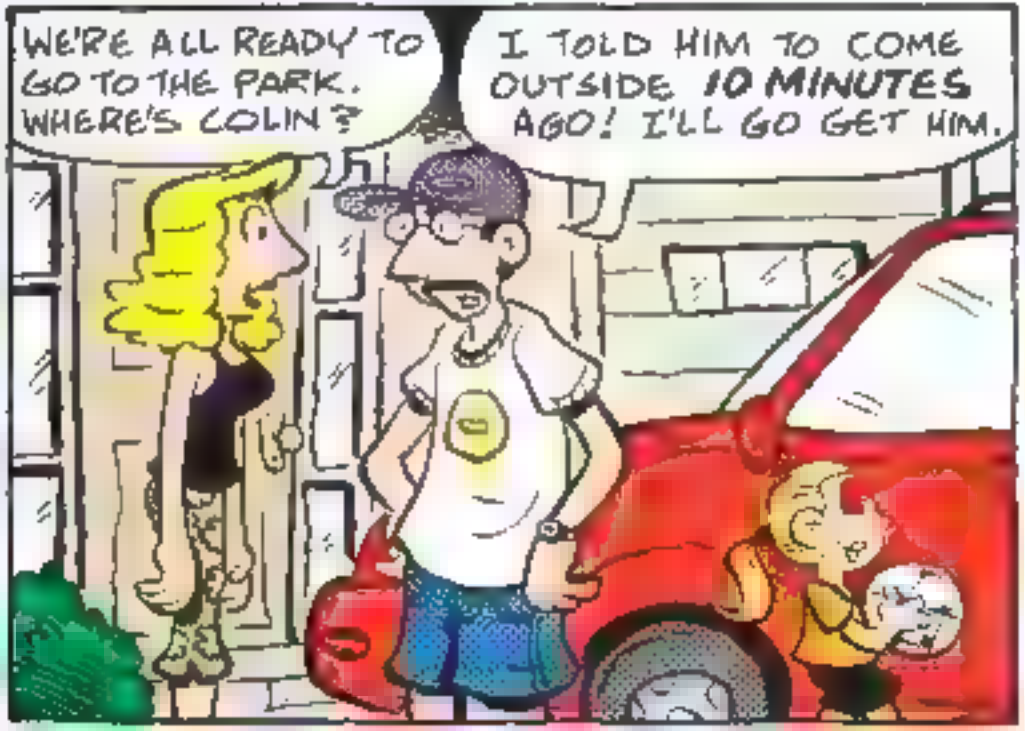
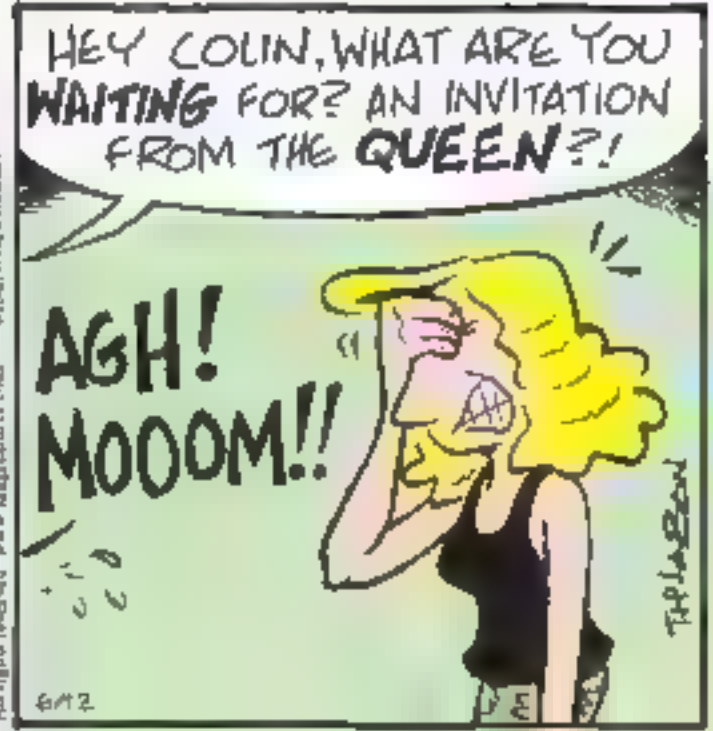
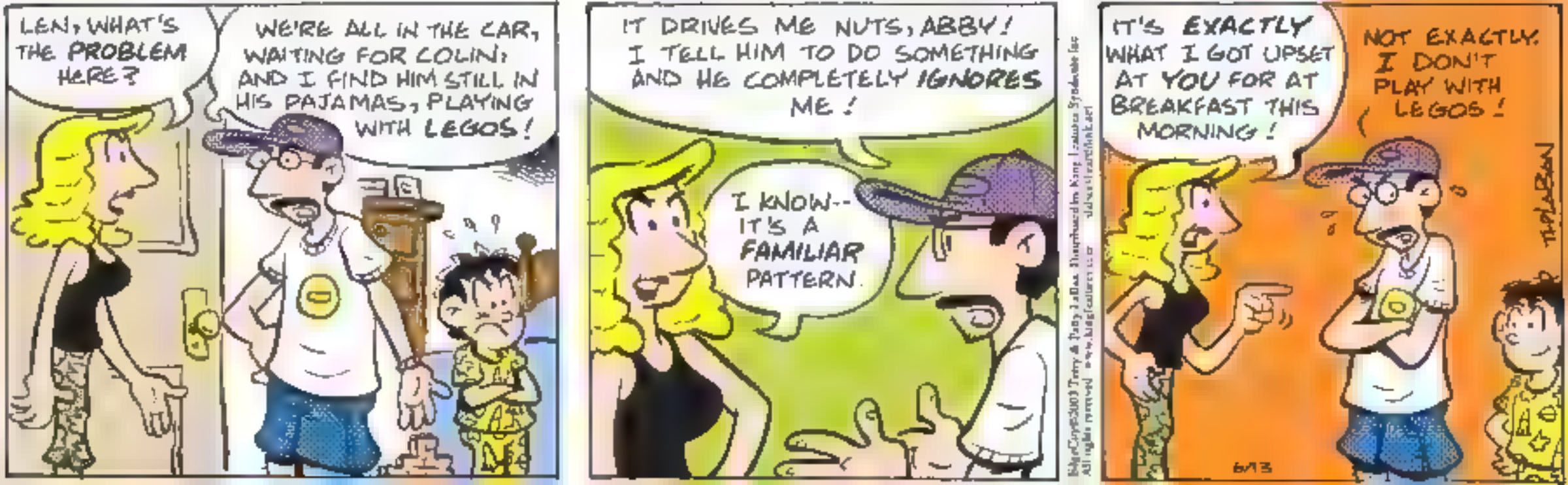
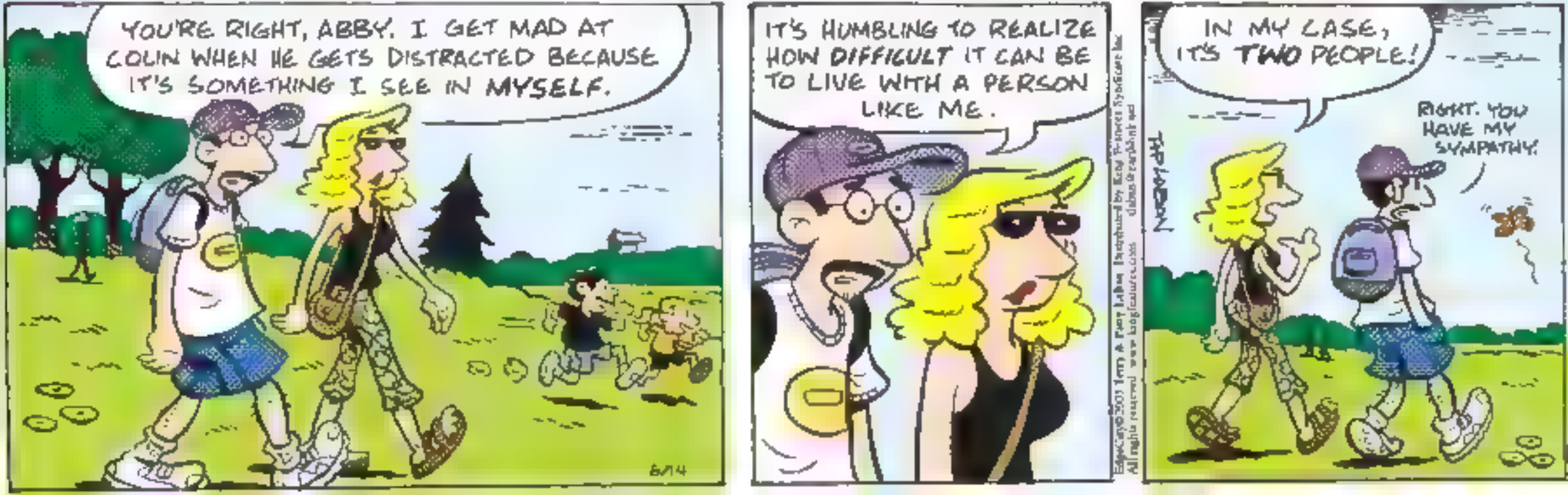


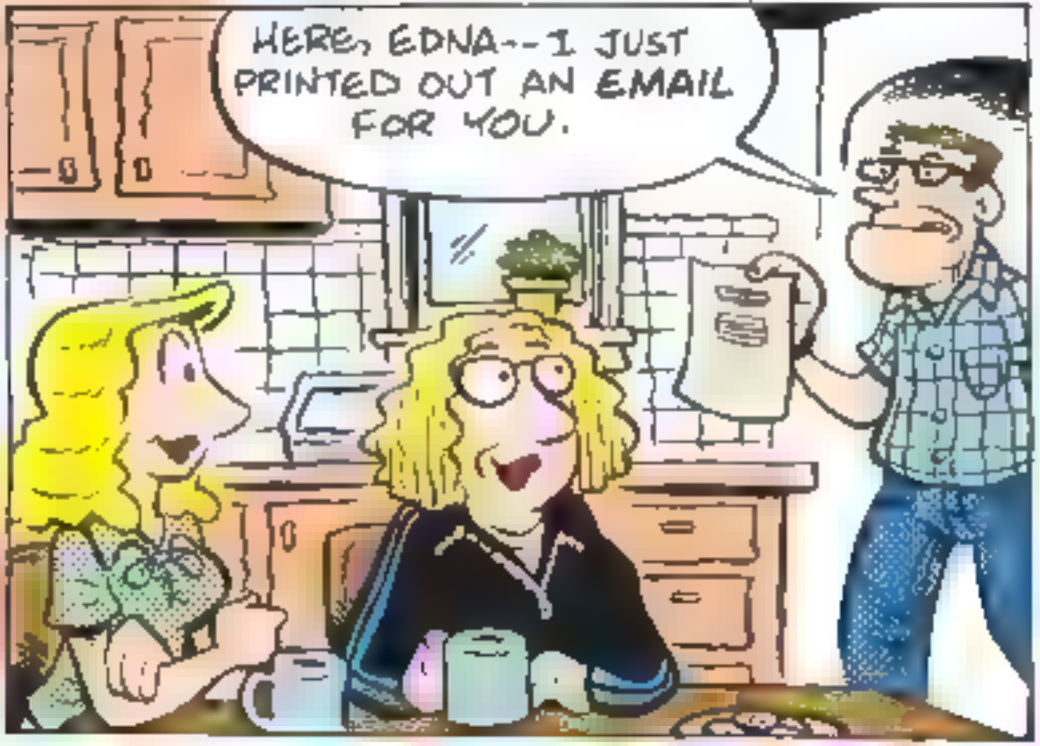

WE'RE ALL READY TO GO TO THE PARK. WHERE'S COLIN?
I TOLD HIM TO COME OUTSIDE 10 MINUTES AGO! I'LL GO GET HIM.

FINE. BUT DON'T GET HIM ALL UPSET. THE LAST THING WE NEED NOW IS AN ANGRY SCENE!
COME ON, ABBY-- THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE A "SCENE".

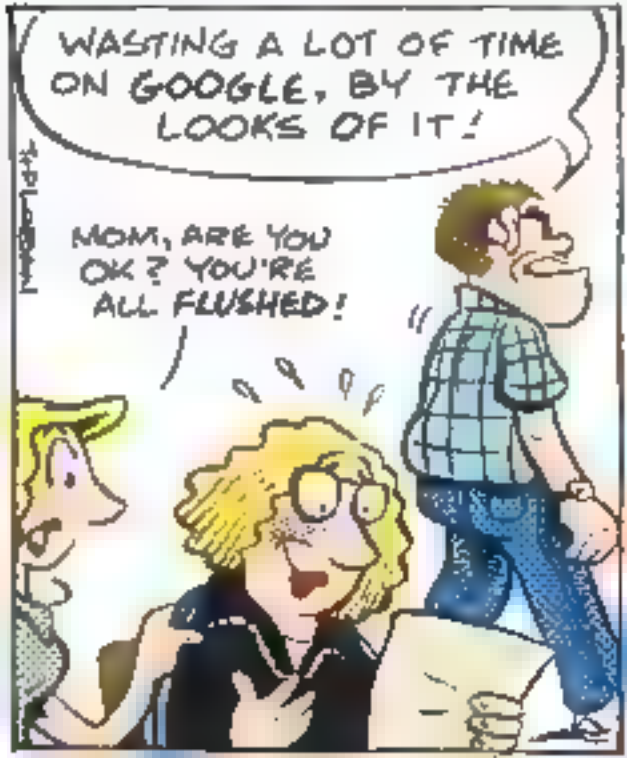

HEY COLIN, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? AN INVITATION FROM THE QUEEN?!
AGH! MOOOM!!


LEN, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM HERE?
WE'RE ALL IN THE CAR, WAITING FOR COLIN; AND I FIND HIM STILL IN HIS PAJAMAS, PLAYING WITH LEGOS!
IT DRIVES ME NUTS, ABBY! I TELL HIM TO DO SOMETHING AND HE COMPLETELY IGNORES ME!
I KNOW-- IT'S A FAMILIAR PATTERN.
IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I GOT UPSET AT YOU FOR AT BREAKFAST THIS MORNING!
NOT EXACTLY. I DON'T PLAY WITH LEGOS!
6/13
TOLAGAN

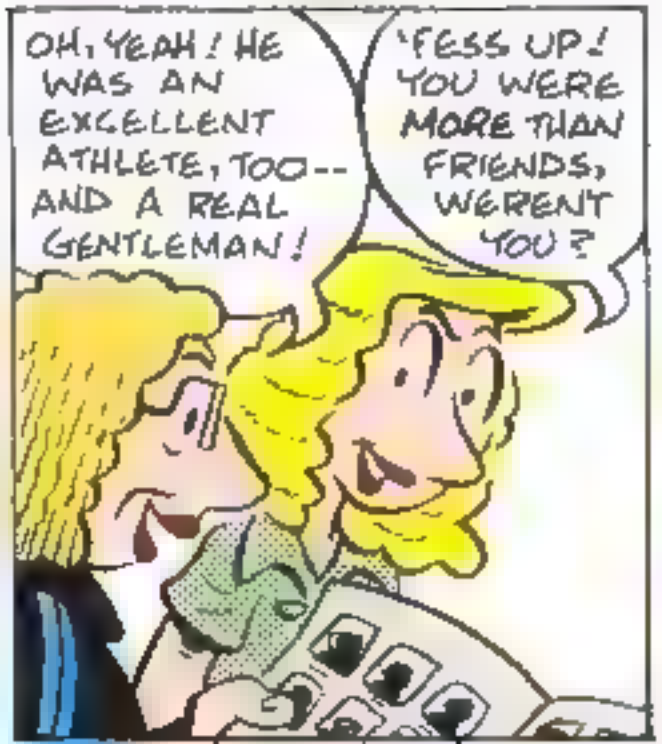

YOU'RE RIGHT, ABBY. I GET MAD AT COLIN WHEN HE GETS DISTRACTED BECAUSE IT'S SOMETHING I SEE IN MYSELF.
6/14
IT'S HUMBLING TO REALIZE HOW DIFFICULT IT CAN BE TO LIVE WITH A PERSON LIKE ME.
IN MY CASE, IT'S TWO PEOPLE!
RIGHT. YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHY.


HERE, EDNA--I JUST PRINTED OUT AN EMAIL FOR YOU.

OH, GOLLY! HENRY SILVER FROM HIGH SCHOOL LOOKED ME UP! I HAVENT HEARD FROM HIM IN YEARS! I WONDER WHAT HE'S DOING?
6/16

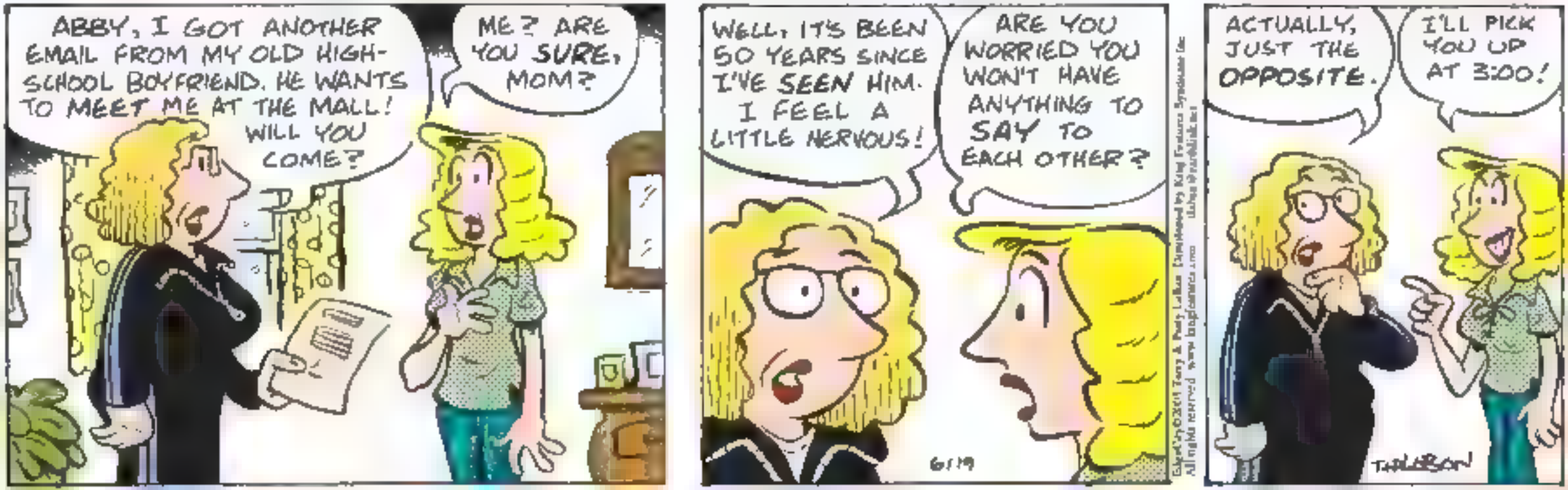

WASTING A LOT OF TIME ON GOOGLE, BY THE LOOKS OF IT!
MOM, ARE YOU OK? YOU'RE ALL FLUSHED!

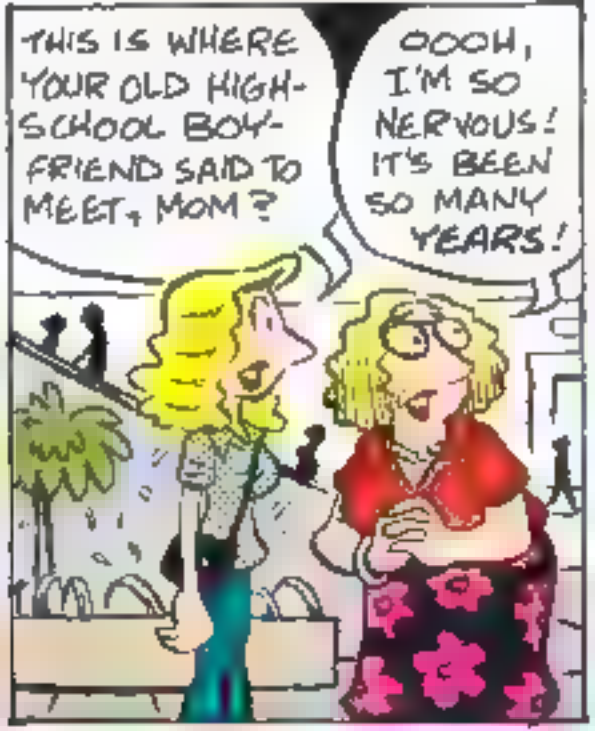
THERE, ABBY! THAT'S THE OLD HIGH-SCHOOL FRIEND WHO EMAILED ME-- HENRY SILVER!
GOSH, MOM-- HE'S GOOD-LOOKING!
Hoyville High 1954
6-17


OH, YEAH! HE WAS AN EXCELLENT ATHLETE, TOO-- AND A REAL GENTLEMAN!
'FESS UP! YOU WERE MORE THAN FRIENDS, WERENT YOU?

WE DID DATE A LITTLE... HOW DID YOU KNOW?
HIS PICTURE'S STILL COVERED WITH LIPSTICK!
Hoyville High 1954
TOPLABAN

DAD, DID YOU KNOW THIS GUY WHO WANTS TO GET TOGETHER WITH MOM IS HER OLD HIGH-SCHOOL BOY-FRIEND?
YEAH. SO?
APPARENTLY, SHE HAD QUITE A CRUSH ON HIM AT ONE TIME. AREN'T YOU AT ALL THREATENED BY THAT?
THREATENED? HECK, I FEEL SORRY FOR HIM!
I MEAN, THE MAN'S PUSHING 70, AND HE DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO THAN BOTHER GIRLS HE KNEW IN HIGH SCHOOL!
WELL THAT'S ONE WAY TO LOOK AT IT...

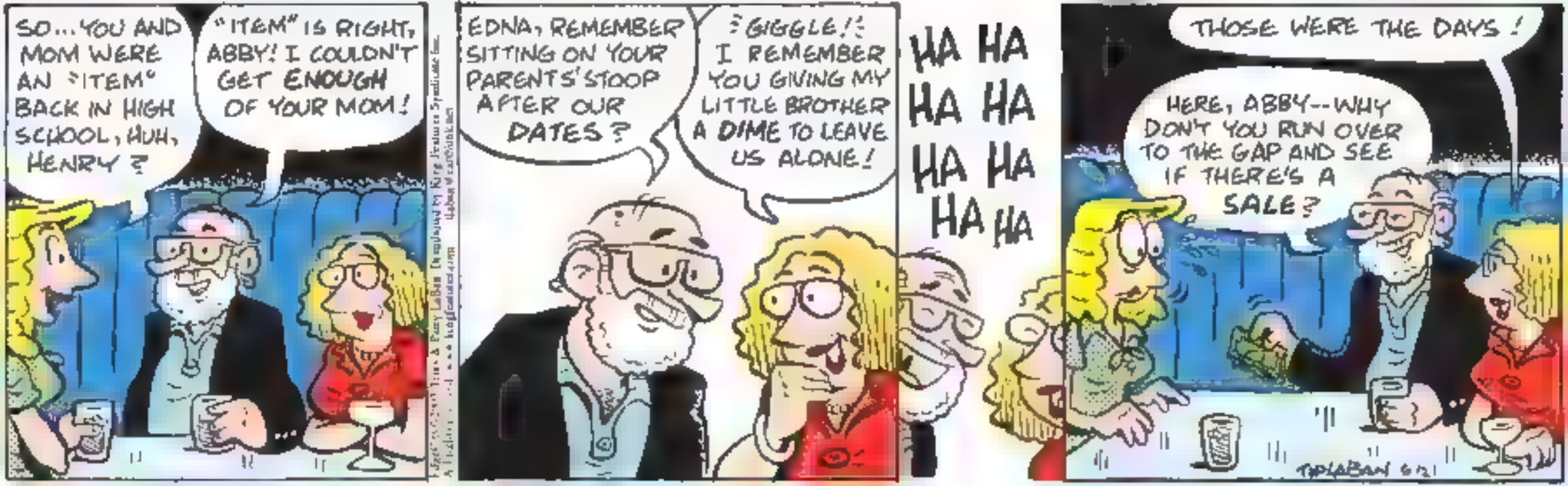

ABBY, I GOT ANOTHER EMAIL FROM MY OLD HIGH-SCHOOL BOYFRIEND. HE WANTS TO MEET ME AT THE MALL! WILL YOU COME?
ME? ARE YOU SURE, MOM?
WELL, IT'S BEEN 50 YEARS SINCE I'VE SEEN HIM. I FEEL A LITTLE NERVOUS!
ARE YOU WORRIED YOU WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO EACH OTHER?
6/19
ACTUALLY, JUST THE OPPOSITE.
I'LL PICK YOU UP AT 3:00!

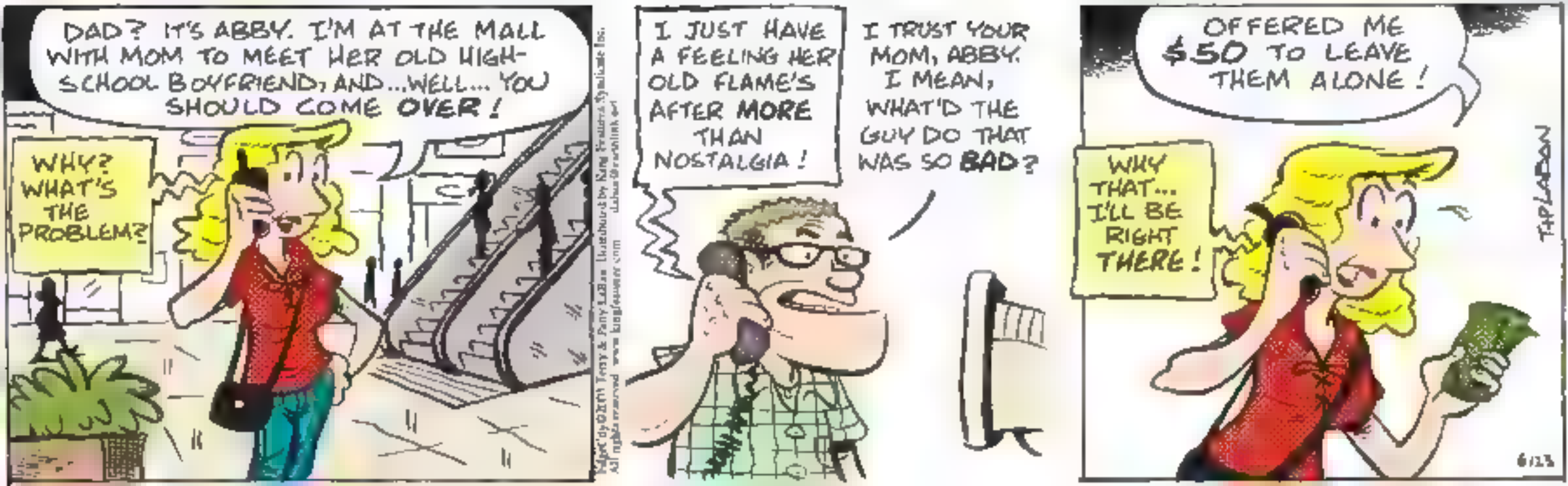

THIS IS WHERE YOUR OLD HIGH-SCHOOL BOY-FRIEND SAID TO MEET, MOM?
OOOH, I'M SO NERVOUS! IT'S BEEN SO MANY YEARS!

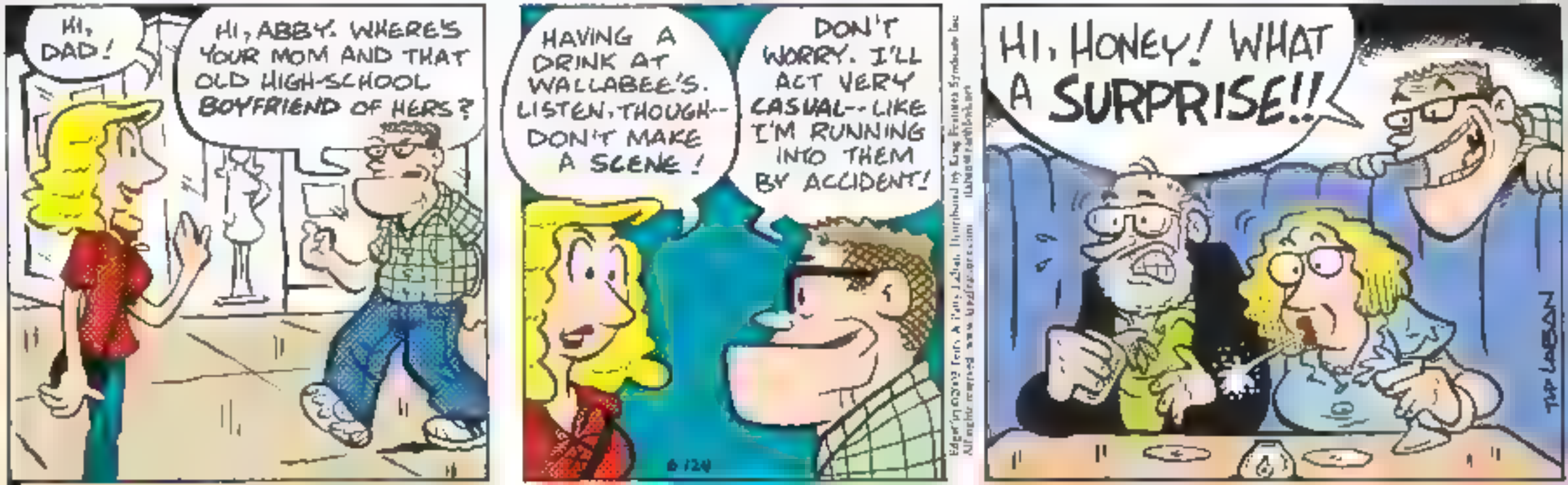
LOOK, IF IT GETS TOO AWKWARD, WE'LL JUST EXCUSE OURSELVES AND LEAVE!

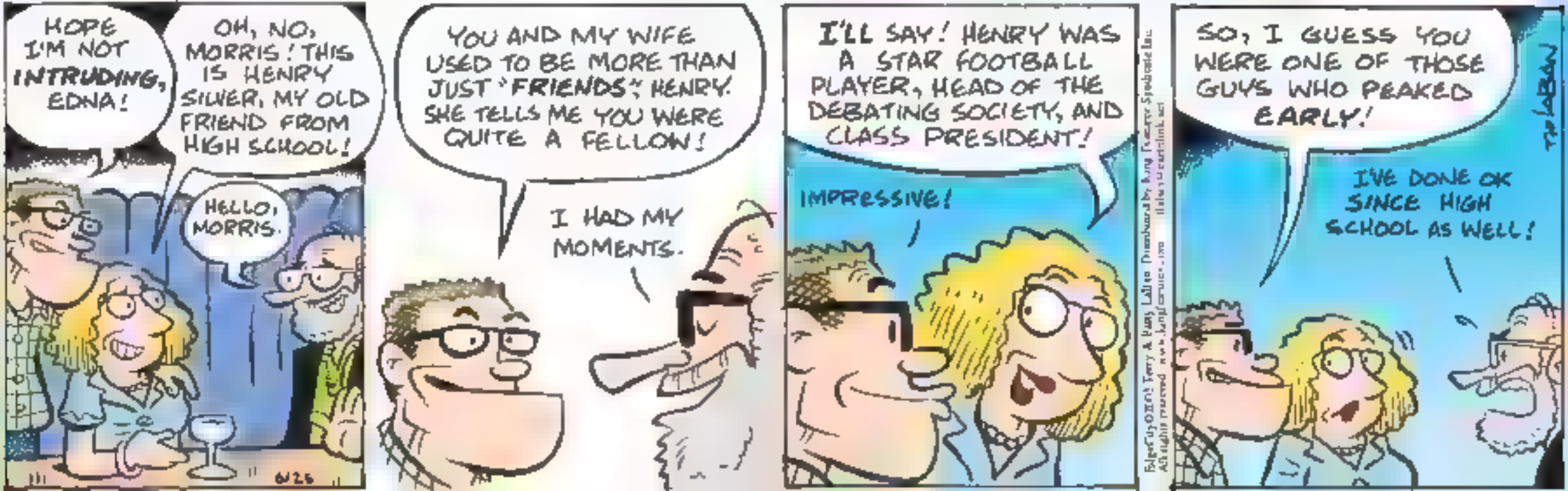
EDNA?
HENRY?!

UH... EXCUSE ME!
©120

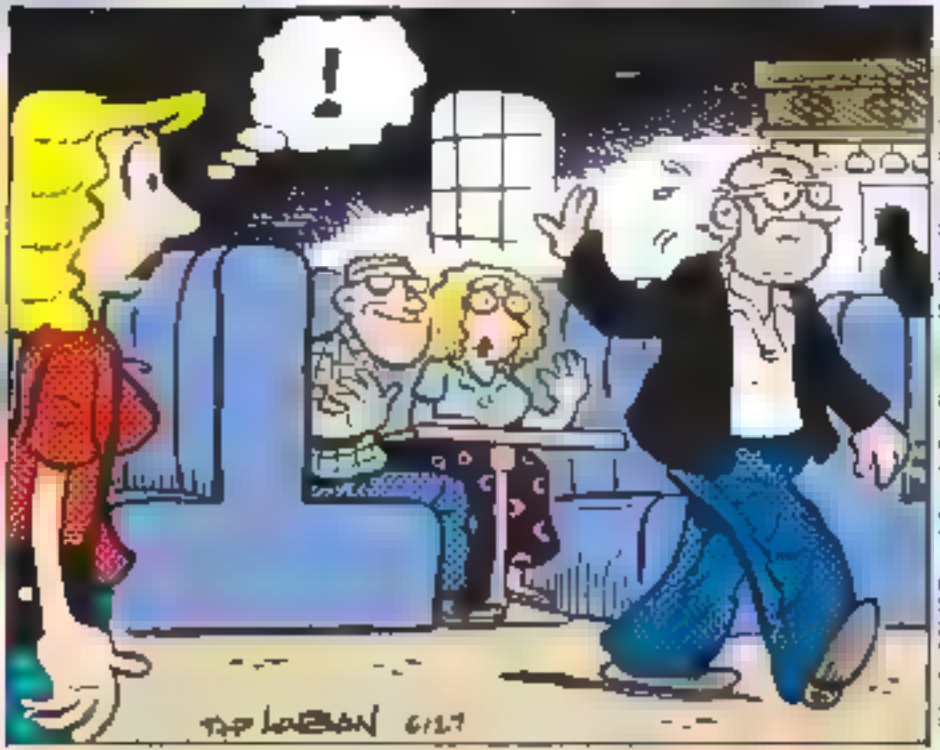

SO... YOU AND MOM WERE AN "ITEM" BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, HUH, HENRY?
"ITEM" IS RIGHT, ABBY! I COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF YOUR MOM!
EDNA, REMEMBER SITTING ON YOUR PARENTS' STOOP AFTER OUR DATES?
:GIGGLE!: I REMEMBER YOU GIVING MY LITTLE BROTHER A DIME TO LEAVE US ALONE!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
THOSE WERE THE DAYS!
HERE, ABBY--WHY DON'T YOU RUN OVER TO THE GAP AND SEE IF THERE'S A SALE?


DAD? IT'S ABBY. I'M AT THE MALL WITH MOM TO MEET HER OLD HIGH-SCHOOL BOYFRIEND, AND...WELL... YOU SHOULD COME OVER!
WHY? WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
I JUST HAVE A FEELING HER OLD FLAME'S AFTER MORE THAN NOSTALGIA!
I TRUST YOUR MOM, ABBY. I MEAN, WHAT'D THE GUY DO THAT WAS SO BAD?
OFFERED ME $50 TO LEAVE THEM ALONE!
WHY THAT... I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
THPLADON
6/23


HI, DAD!
HI, ABBY. WHERE'S YOUR MOM AND THAT OLD HIGH-SCHOOL BOYFRIEND OF HERS?
HAVING A DRINK AT WALLABEE'S. LISTEN, THOUGH-- DON'T MAKE A SCENE!
DON'T WORRY. I'LL ACT VERY CASUAL--LIKE I'M RUNNING INTO THEM BY ACCIDENT!
HI, HONEY! WHAT A SURPRISE!!
TOM LABAN

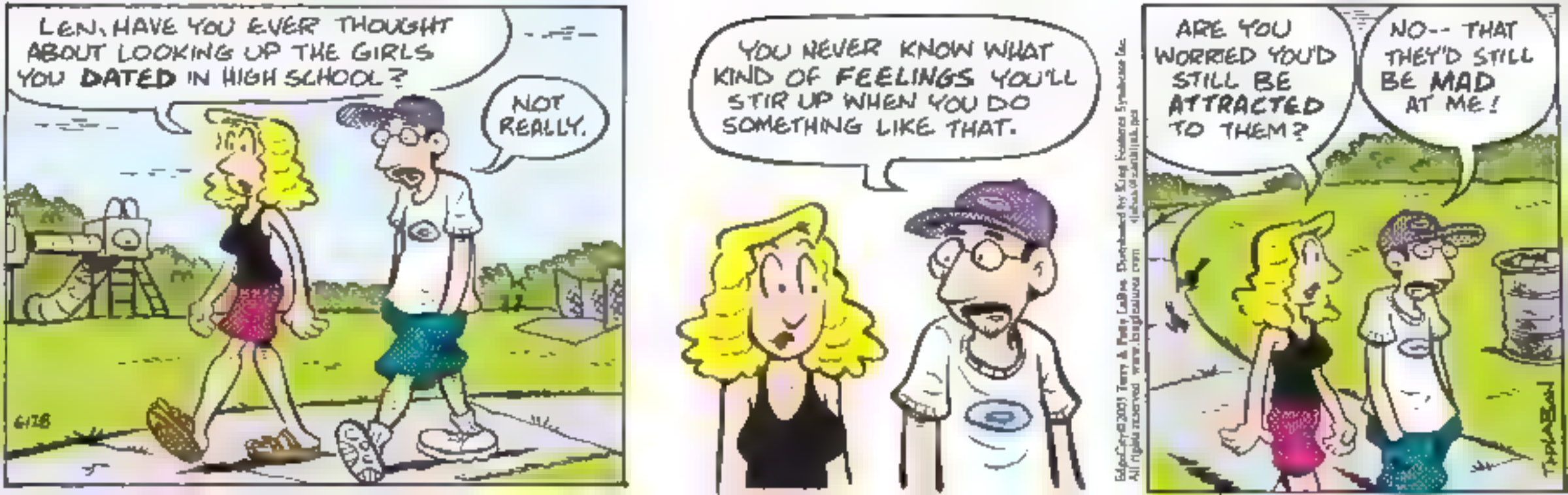

HOPE I'M NOT INTRUDING, EDNA!
OH, NO, MORRIS! THIS IS HENRY SILVER, MY OLD FRIEND FROM HIGH SCHOOL!
HELLO, MORRIS.
YOU AND MY WIFE USED TO BE MORE THAN JUST "FRIENDS", HENRY. SHE TELLS ME YOU WERE QUITE A FELLOW!
I HAD MY MOMENTS.
I'LL SAY! HENRY WAS A STAR FOOTBALL PLAYER, HEAD OF THE DEBATING SOCIETY, AND CLASS PRESIDENT!
IMPRESSIVE!
SO, I GUESS YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO PEAKED EARLY!
I'VE DONE OK SINCE HIGH SCHOOL AS WELL!

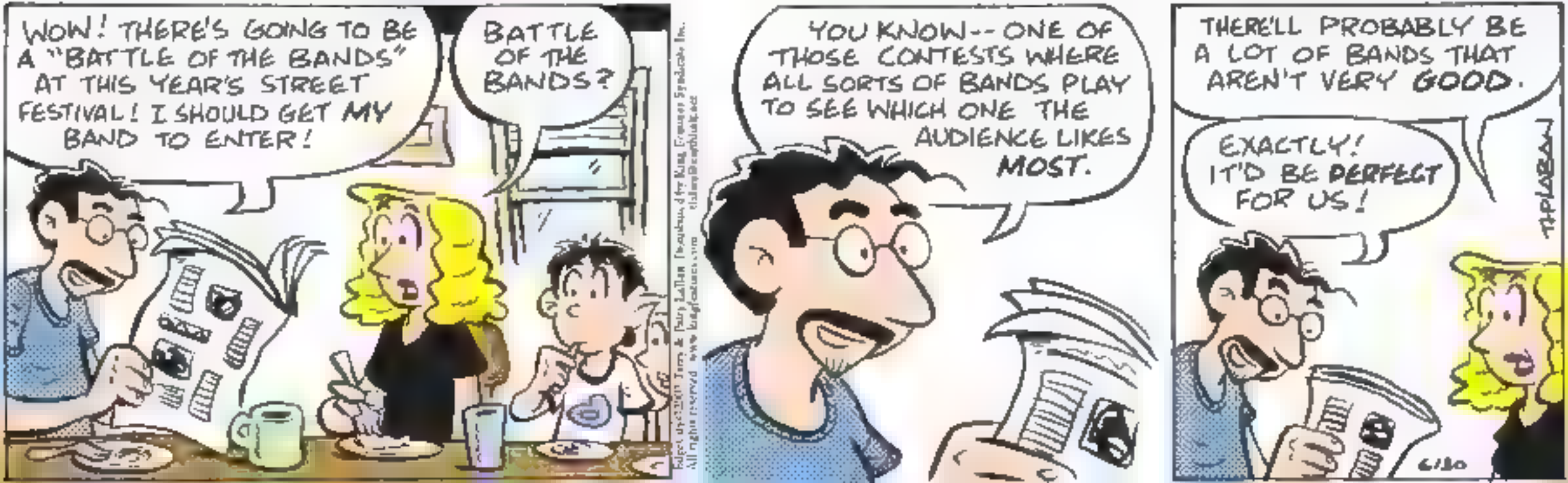
SO, HENRY-- YOU DATED MY WIFE IN HIGH SCHOOL. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE SINCE?
I RETIRED RECENTLY FROM MY JOB AS DIRECTOR OF A MAJOR HOSPITAL NETWORK. AND YOU?
I RETIRED A FEW YEARS AGO. THESE DAYS, MY HOBBY IS SURFING THE INTERNET.
THAT'S NICE. FORTUNATELY, I HAVE THE MEANS TO SPEND MY TIME TRAVELING ABROAD AND SUPPORTING VARIOUS CHARITIES!
6/26
REALLY? THAT'S NOT WHAT YOUR CREDIT RATING SAYS!
MORRIS! YOU DID RESEARCH!


!
TOP LOBBAN 6/27

MOM, I JUST SAW YOUR OLD HIGH-SCHOOL BOYFRIEND LEAVE! DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
YEAH! YOUR FATHER SHOWED UP AND SCARED HIM OFF!

IT'S MY FAULT FOR CALLING DAD. ARE YOU ANGRY?
NO, DELIGHTED! I DIDN'T THINK HE CARED!


LEN, HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT LOOKING UP THE GIRLS YOU DATED IN HIGH SCHOOL?
NOT REALLY.
6/28
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT KIND OF FEELINGS YOU'LL STIR UP WHEN YOU DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
ARE YOU WORRIED YOU'D STILL BE ATTRACTED TO THEM?
NO-- THAT THEY'D STILL BE MAD AT ME!
THABEET

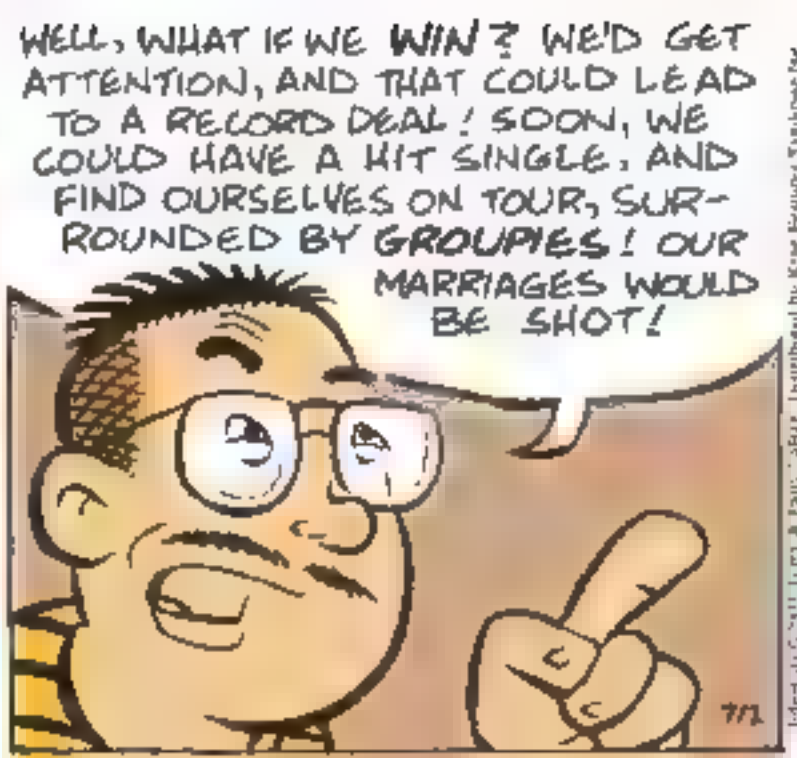

WOW! THERE'S GOING TO BE A "BATTLE OF THE BANDS" AT THIS YEAR'S STREET FESTIVAL! I SHOULD GET MY BAND TO ENTER!
BATTLE OF THE BANDS?
YOU KNOW-- ONE OF THOSE CONTESTS WHERE ALL SORTS OF BANDS PLAY TO SEE WHICH ONE THE AUDIENCE LIKES MOST.
THERE'LL PROBABLY BE A LOT OF BANDS THAT AREN'T VERY GOOD.
EXACTLY! IT'D BE PERFECT FOR US!
TIPLABAN

HEY, YOU GUYS--WHAT WOULD YOU THINK OF ENTERING A BATTLE OF THE BANDS AT THIS YEAR'S STREET FESTIVAL?
MIDLIFE CRISIS

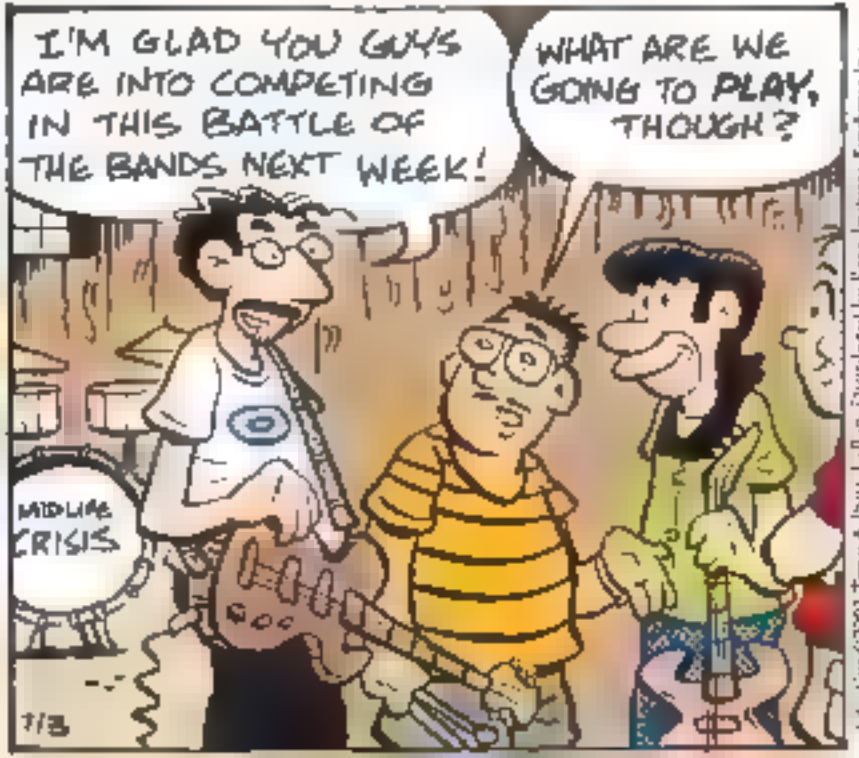
I DUNNO, LEN--WE MIGHT LOOK PRETTY SILLY PLAYING AGAINST ALL THOSE YOUNGSTERS!
COME ON, GEORGE! WE CAN ROCK AS HARD AS ANY BUNCH OF 22-YEAR-OLDS!

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
ACTUALLY, I DOUBT THAT'D BE TRUE EVEN IF WE WERE 22!

COMPETE IN A BATTLE OF THE BANDS? I DON'T KNOW, LEN--DO WE REALLY WANT TO PUT OURSELVES THROUGH THAT?
THROUGH WHAT? EVEN IF WE LOSE, IT'LL STILL BE FUN!
CRISIS


WELL, WHAT IF WE WIN? WE'D GET ATTENTION, AND THAT COULD LEAD TO A RECORD DEAL! SOON, WE COULD HAVE A HIT SINGLE, AND FIND OURSELVES ON TOUR, SURROUNDED BY GROUPIES! OUR MARRIAGES WOULD BE SHOT!

DON'T WORRY, SAM. WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, THE RECORD COMPANY WOULD RIP US OFF AND IT'D BE ALL OVER.
NOOO!!
I SAY WE TAKE A VOTE.



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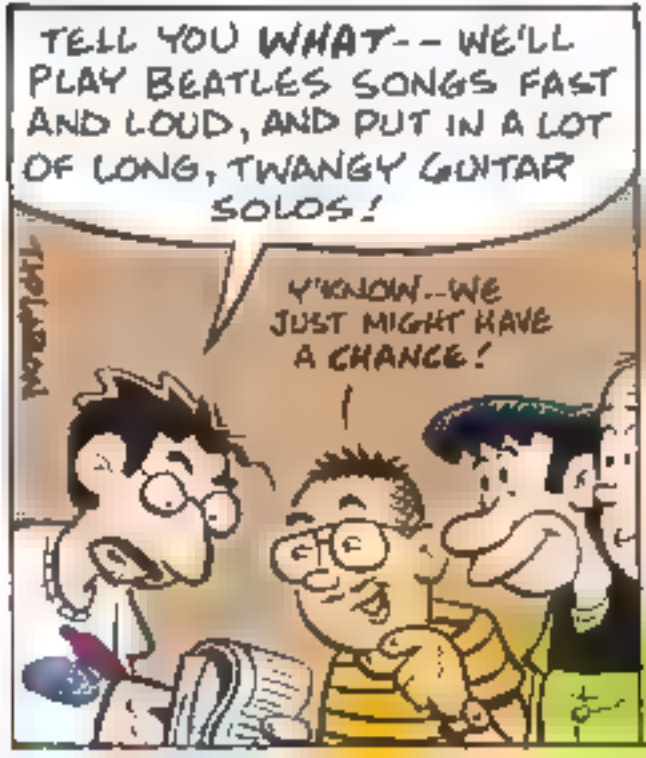

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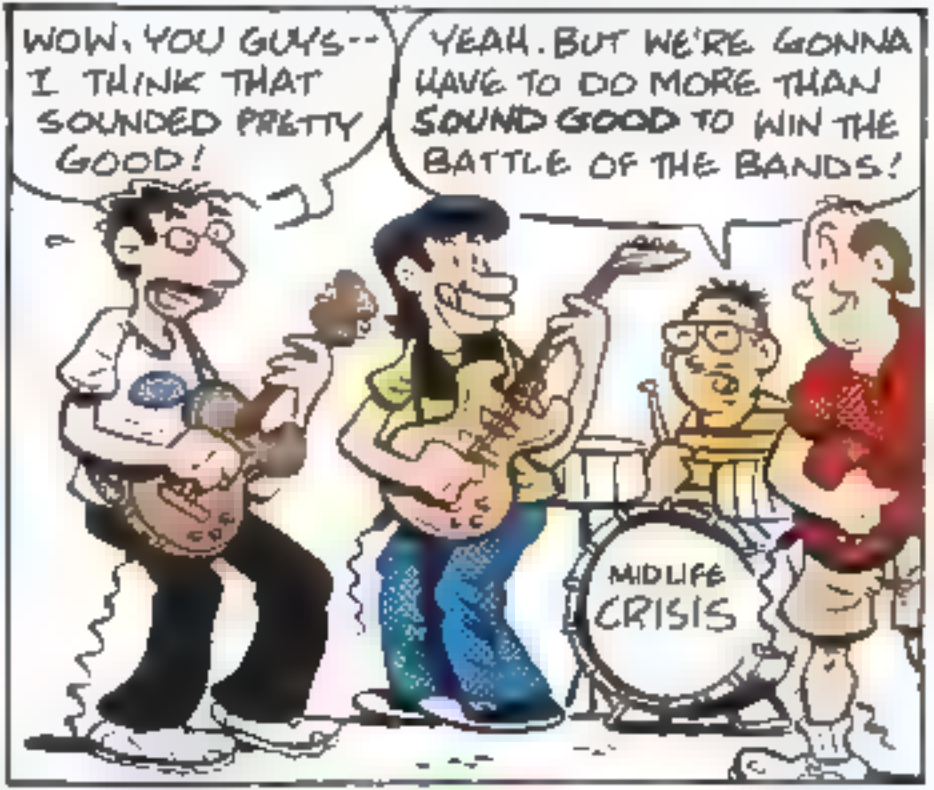
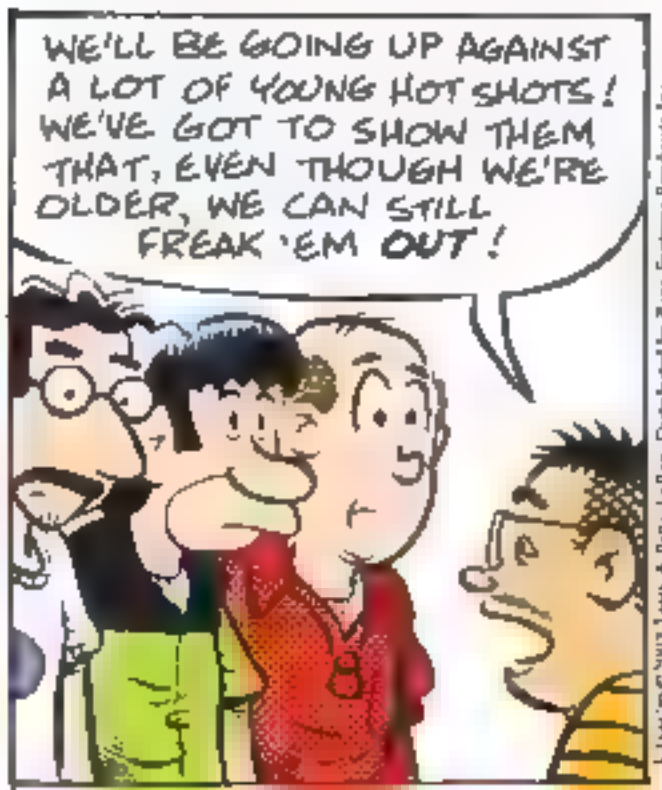
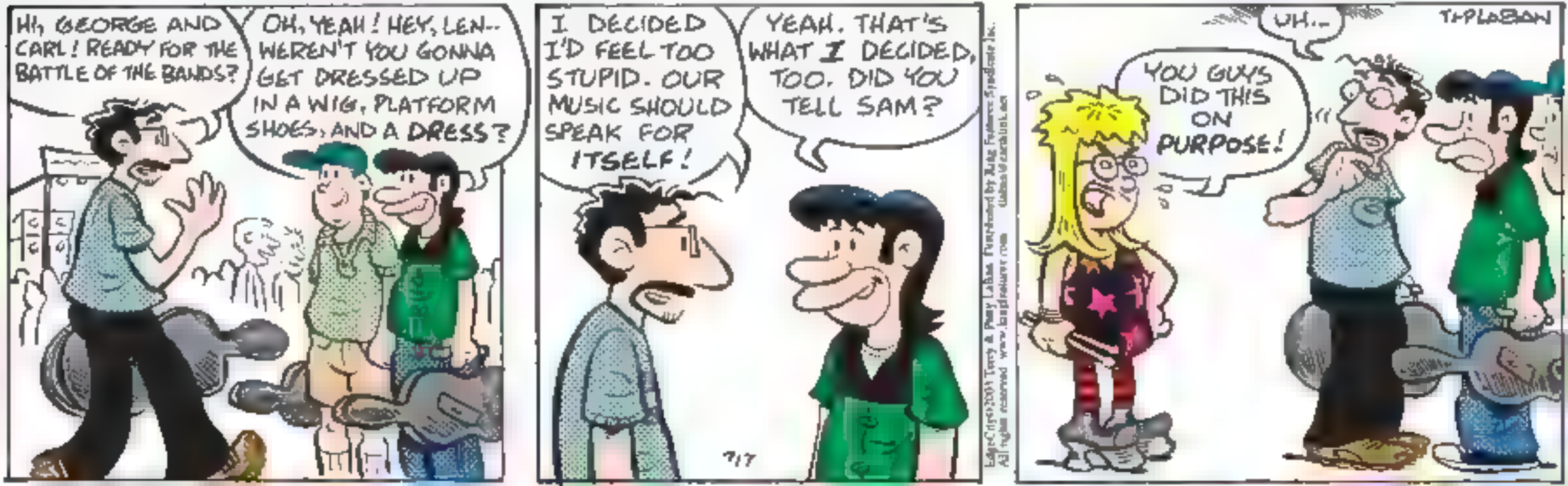
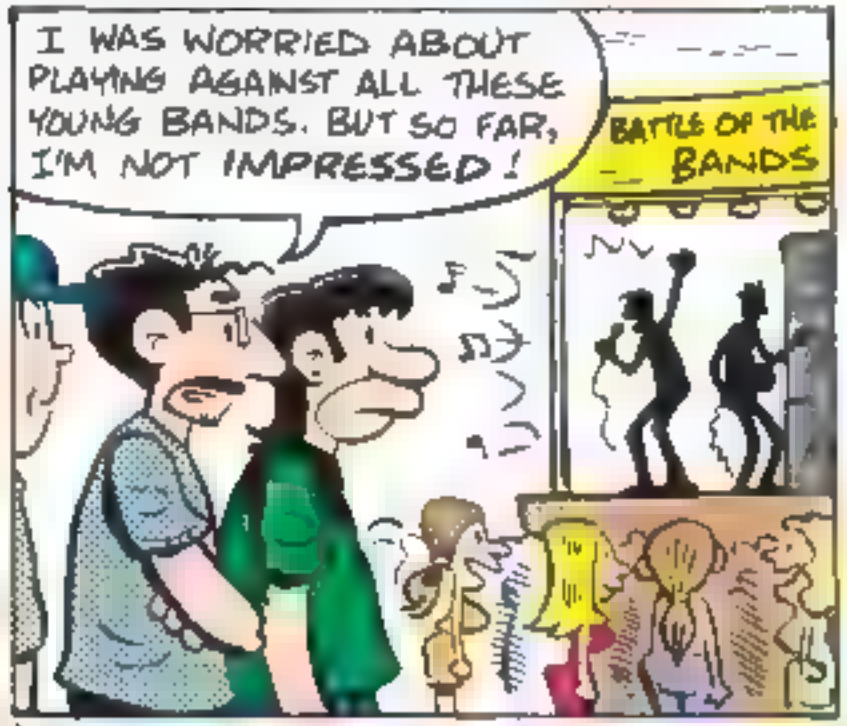

WOW, YOU GUYS-- I THINK THAT SOUNDED PRETTY GOOD!
YEAH. BUT WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO DO MORE THAN SOUND GOOD TO WIN THE BATTLE OF THE BANDS!
MIDLIFE CRISIS

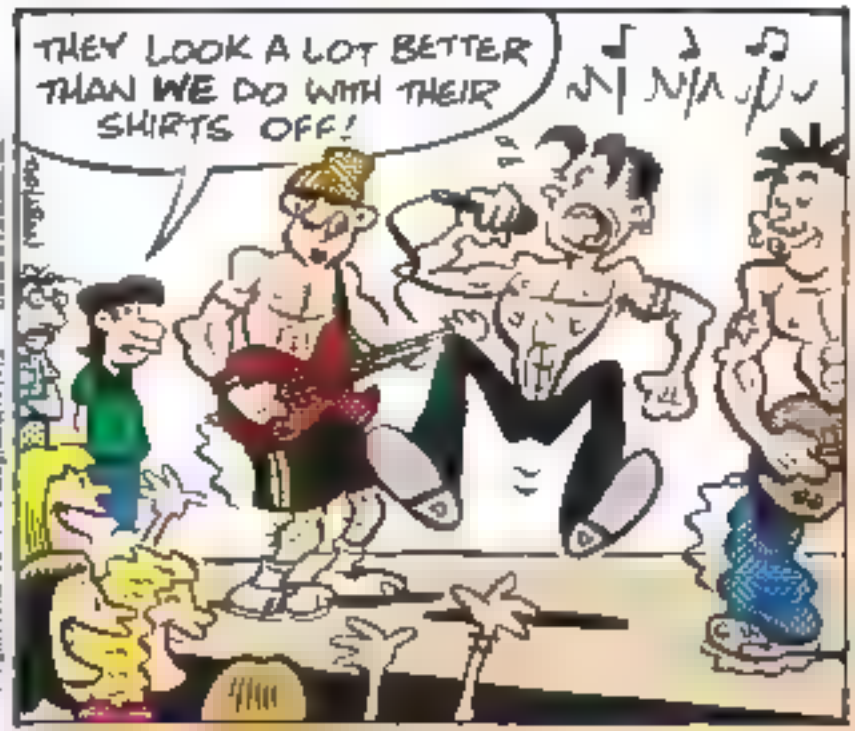

WE'LL BE GOING UP AGAINST A LOT OF YOUNG HOT SHOTS! WE'VE GOT TO SHOW THEM THAT, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE OLDER, WE CAN STILL FREAK 'EM OUT!

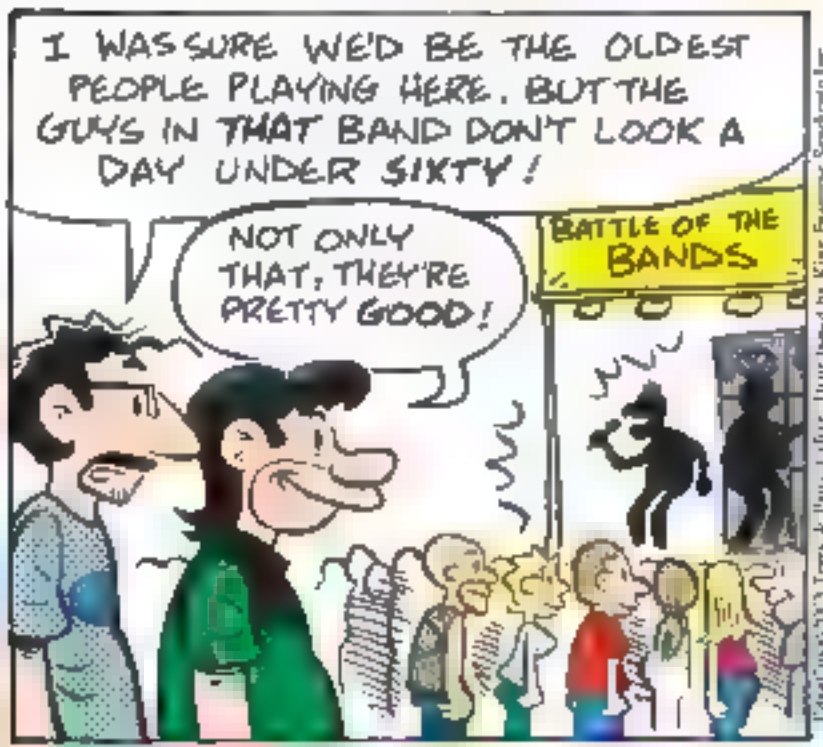
HEY, LEN! HOW WAS BAND PRACTICE?
TAPLOBAN 7/5


HI, GEORGE AND CARL! READY FOR THE BATTLE OF THE BANDS?
OH, YEAH! HEY, LEN-- WEREN'T YOU GONNA GET DRESSED UP IN A WIG, PLATFORM SHOES, AND A DRESS?
I DECIDED I'D FEEL TOO STUPID. OUR MUSIC SHOULD SPEAK FOR ITSELF!
YEAH. THAT'S WHAT I DECIDED, TOO. DID YOU TELL SAM?
7/17
UH...
YOU GUYS DID THIS ON PURPOSE!
TRPLABAN

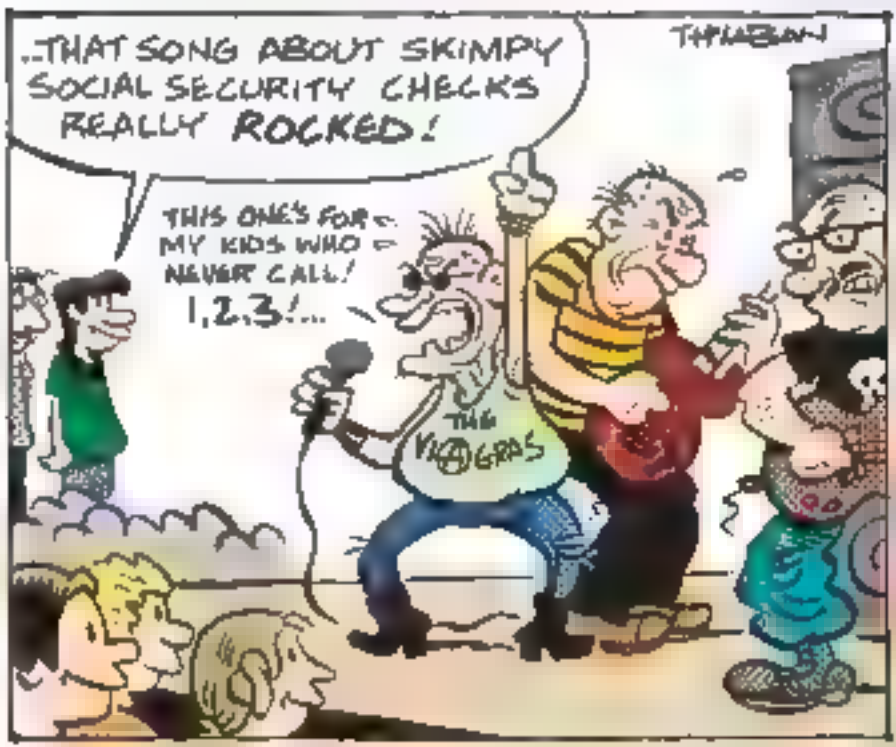

I WAS WORRIED ABOUT PLAYING AGAINST ALL THESE YOUNG BANDS. BUT SO FAR, I'M NOT IMPRESSED!
BATTLE OF THE BANDS

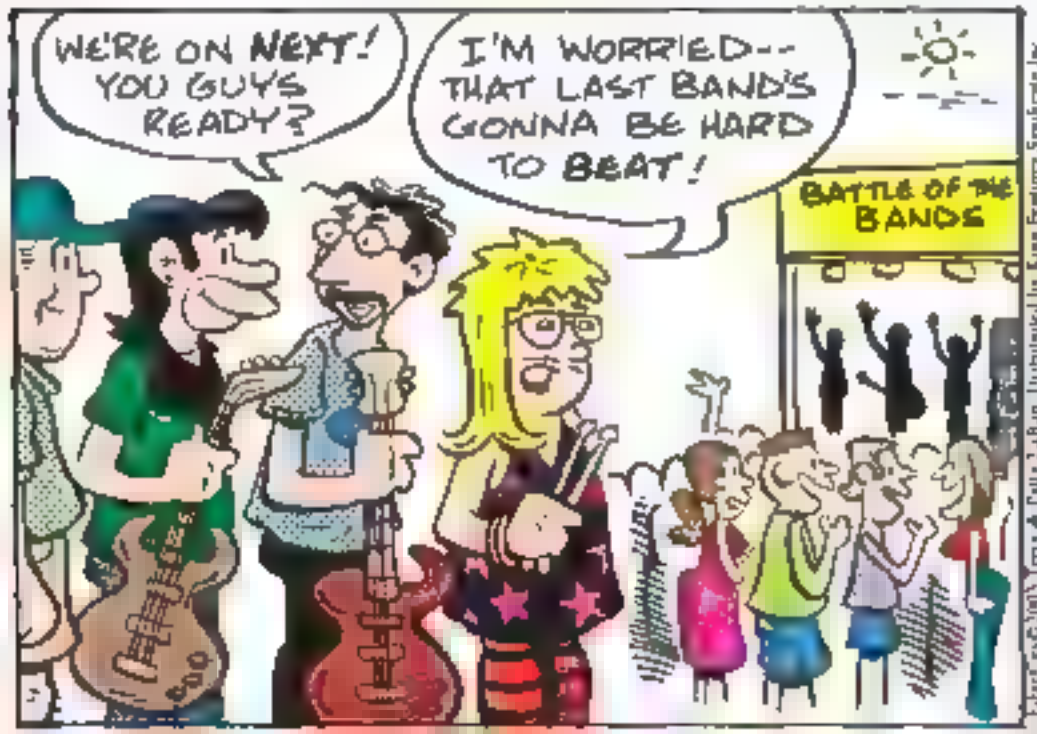
OUR SONGS ARE BETTER THAN THEIRS. WE'RE BETTER MUSICIANS, TOO!
MAYBE. BUT I'LL TELL YOU THIS...
7/8


THEY LOOK A LOT BETTER THAN WE DO WITH THEIR SHIRTS OFF!


I WAS SURE WE'D BE THE OLDEST PEOPLE PLAYING HERE. BUT THE GUYS IN THAT BAND DON'T LOOK A DAY UNDER SIXTY!
NOT ONLY THAT, THEY'RE PRETTY GOOD!
BATTLE OF THE BANDS

HUMPH! THEY'RE JUST A CHEAP NOVELTY ACT, IF YOU ASK ME!
C'MON, LEN-- YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT...

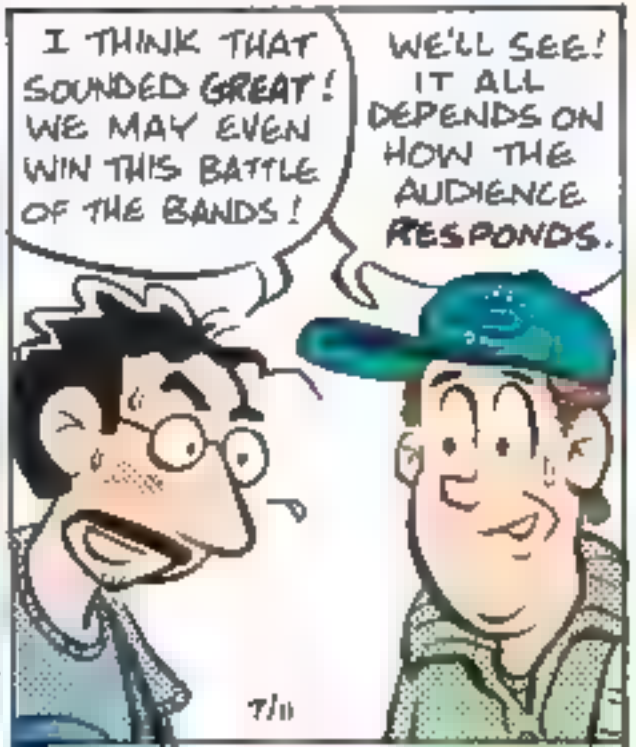

..THAT SONG ABOUT SKIMPY SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS REALLY ROCKED!
THIS ONE'S FOR MY KIDS WHO NEVER CALL! 1,2,3!...
THE VIAGRAS

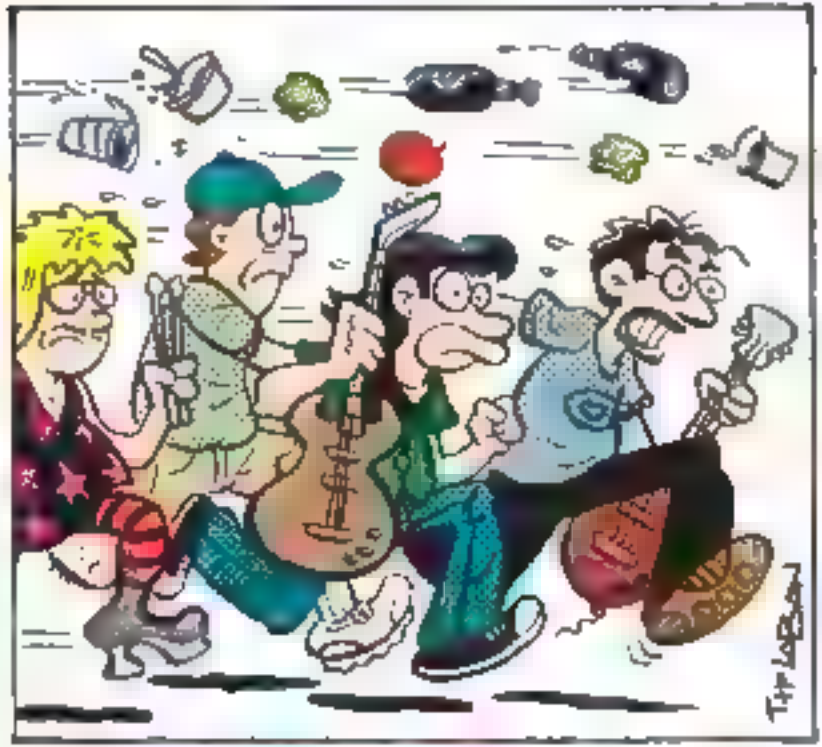

WE'RE ON NEXT! YOU GUYS READY?
I'M WORRIED-- THAT LAST BAND'S GONNA BE HARD TO BEAT!
BATTLE OF THE BANDS

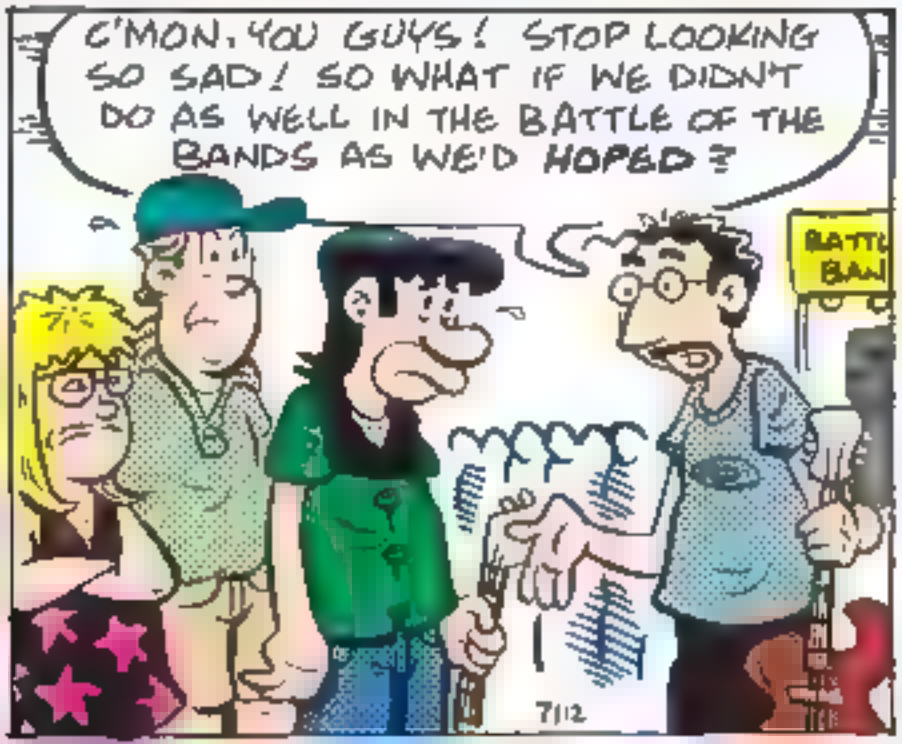
JUST PLAY YOUR BEST, SAM! WE'RE AS GOOD AS ANYONE!
ROCK 'N' ROLL'S NEVER BEEN ABOUT TALENT, LEN! WE NEED TO GIVE 'EM A SHOW!
7/10

FOR THE LAST TIME, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SMASH OUR INSTRUMENTS!!
WELL, YOU COULD AT LEAST SET FIRE TO YOUR GUITAR!

MIDLIFE CRISIS


I THINK THAT SOUNDED GREAT! WE MAY EVEN WIN THIS BATTLE OF THE BANDS!
WE'LL SEE! IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW THE AUDIENCE RESPONDS.
7/11





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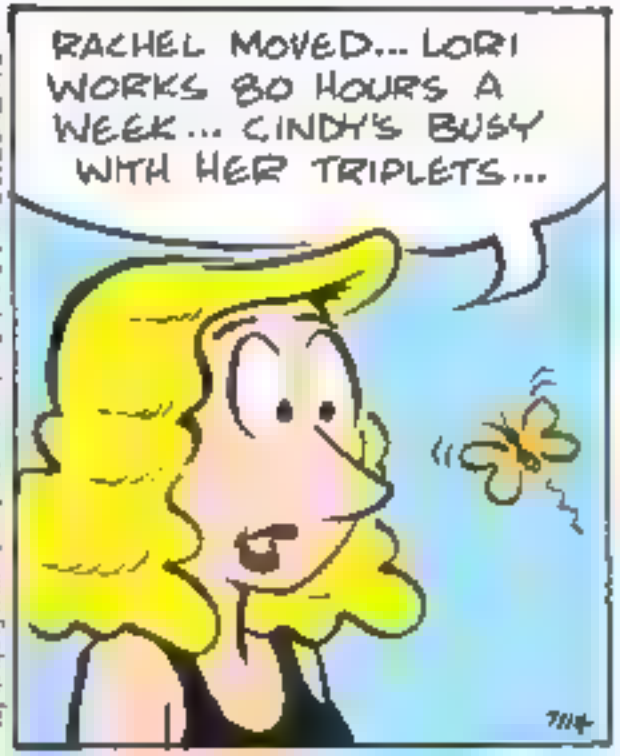
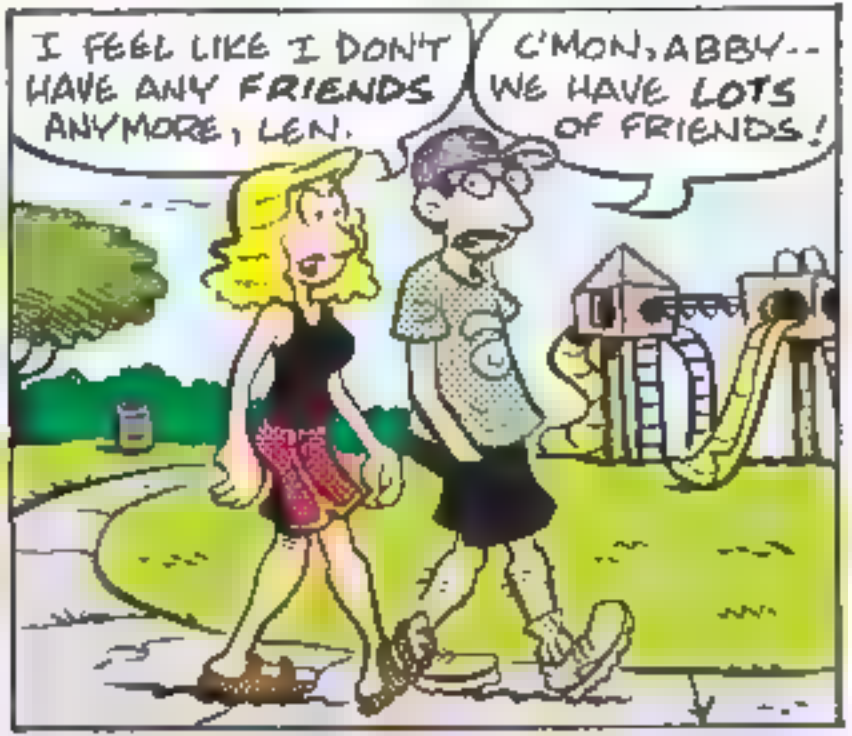
I HAVE A DAY OFF THIS WEEK. I'D LIKE TO CALL A FRIEND, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYONE TO CALL!

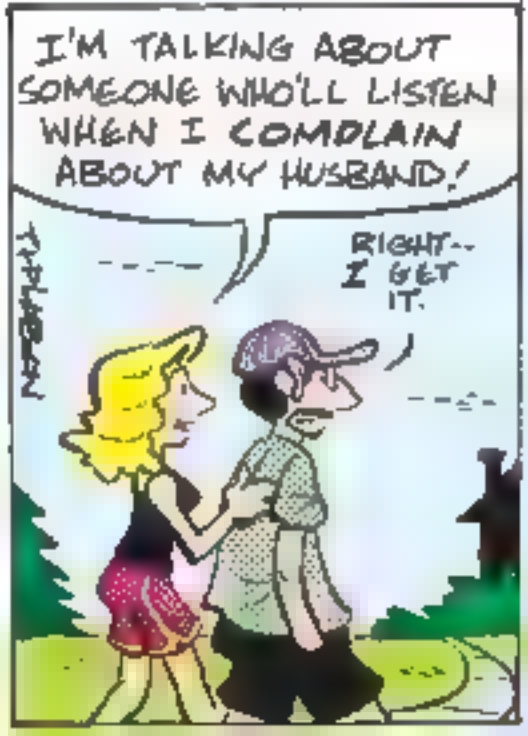

RACHEL MOVED... LORI WORKS 80 HOURS A WEEK... CINDY'S BUSY WITH HER TRIPLETS...

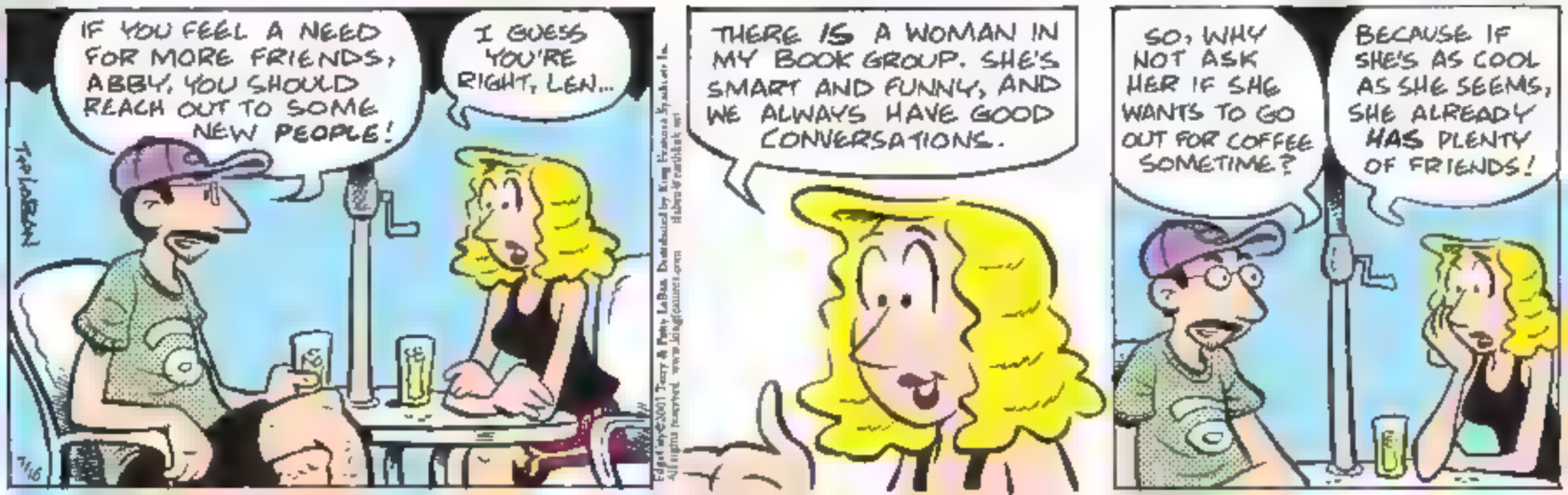
HOW CAN YOU MAINTAIN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS IF YOU NEVER SEE YOUR FRIENDS?
SOMETIMES THE FRIENDS I DON'T SEE ARE THE ONES I END UP LIKING BEST!

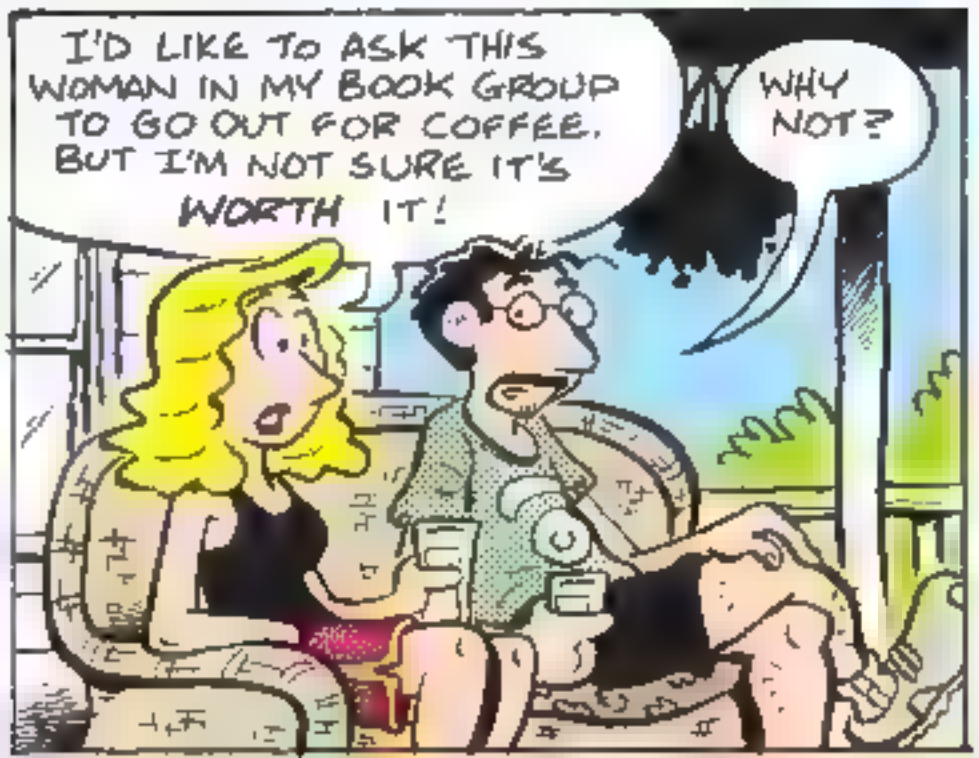

I FEEL LIKE I DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS ANYMORE, LEN.
C'MON, ABBY-- WE HAVE LOTS OF FRIENDS!

AS COUPLES. BUT I MEAN PERSONAL FRIENDS--THE KIND I FEEL SAFE SHARING MY SECRETS WITH!
7/15

WHAT ABOUT ME?
I FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT YOU, TOO, HONEY. BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT.


I'M TALKING ABOUT SOMEONE WHO'LL LISTEN WHEN I COMPLAIN ABOUT MY HUSBAND!
RIGHT-- I GET IT.


IF YOU FEEL A NEED FOR MORE FRIENDS, ABBY, YOU SHOULD REACH OUT TO SOME NEW PEOPLE!
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, LEN...
THERE IS A WOMAN IN MY BOOK GROUP. SHE'S SMART AND FUNNY, AND WE ALWAYS HAVE GOOD CONVERSATIONS.
SO, WHY NOT ASK HER IF SHE WANTS TO GO OUT FOR COFFEE SOMETIME?
BECAUSE IF SHE'S AS COOL AS SHE SEEMS, SHE ALREADY HAS PLENTY OF FRIENDS!



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YOU KNOW, AMANDA -- I ALWAYS LIKE TALKING TO YOU IN BOOK GROUP!

I LIKE TALKING TO YOU, TOO, ABBY!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO OUT FOR COFFEE NEXT WEEK? WE COULD JUST GRAB AN HOUR SOME AFTERNOON!

THAT'D BE FUN!

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TUESDAY AT 3:00?

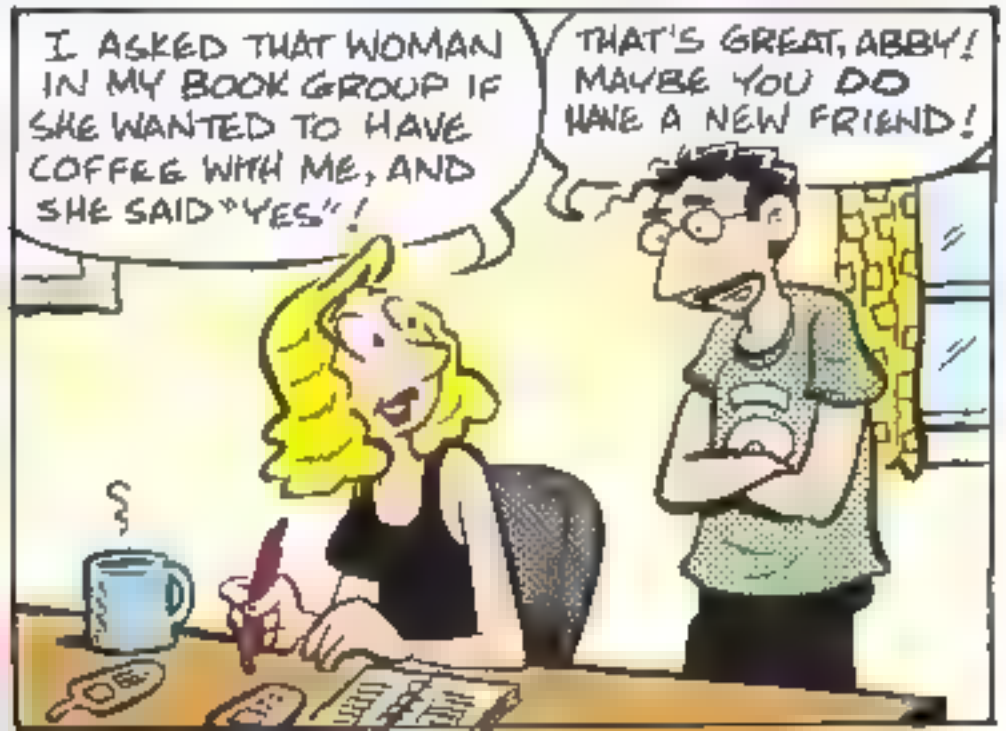
I HAVE TO WORK. HOW 'BOUT 2:30?

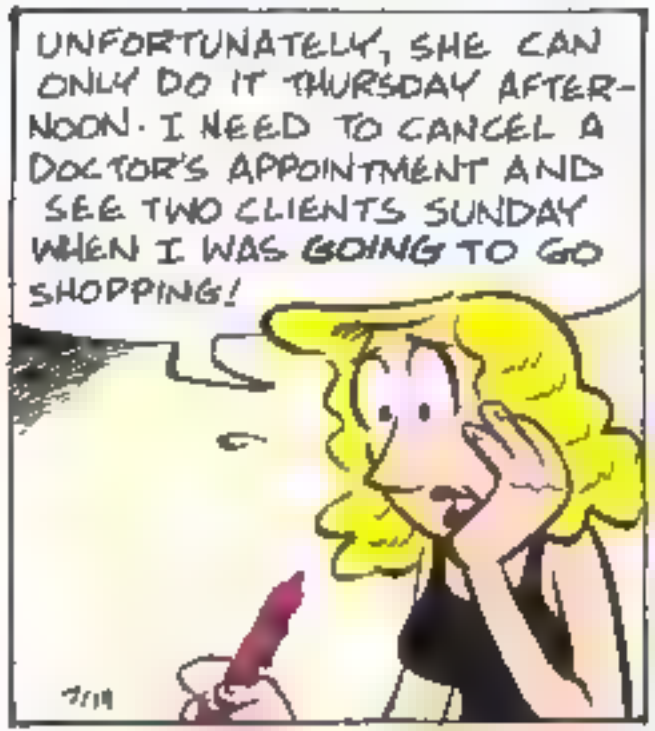
I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT OK, WEDNESDAY?

I'M BUSY THE WHOLE DAY. THURSDAY AT NOON?

I'VE GOT A

TERLABAN





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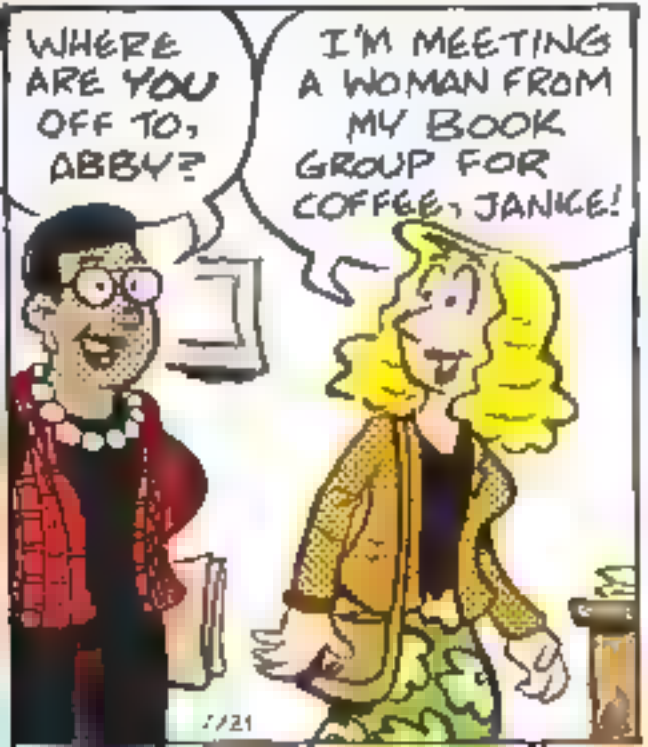
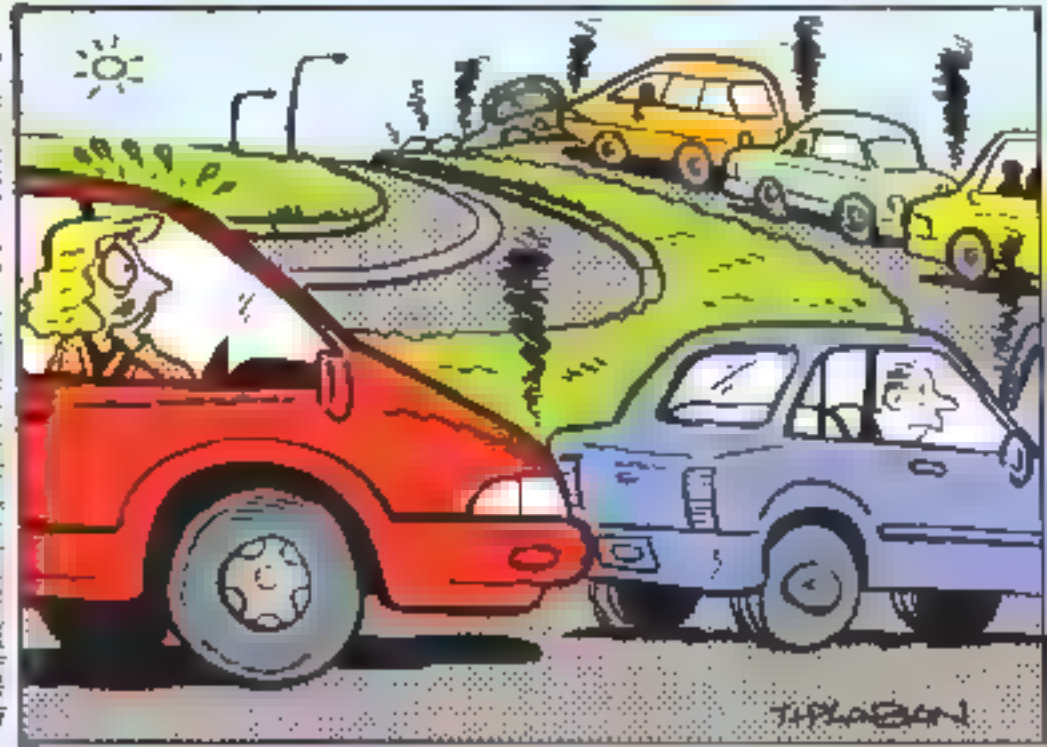
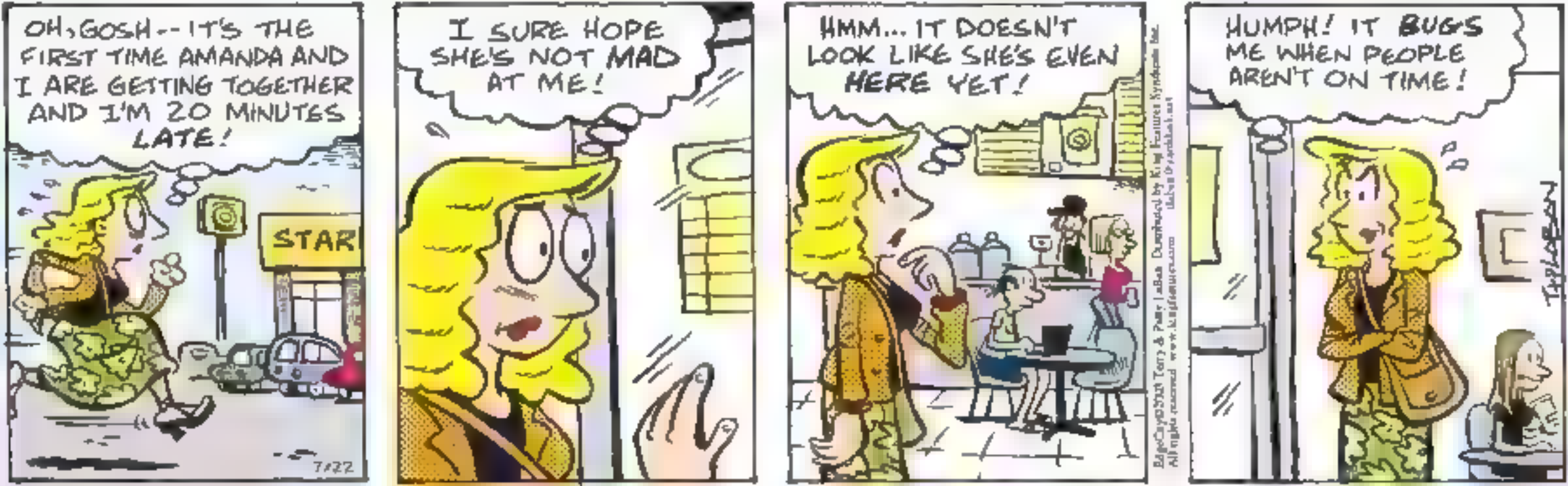
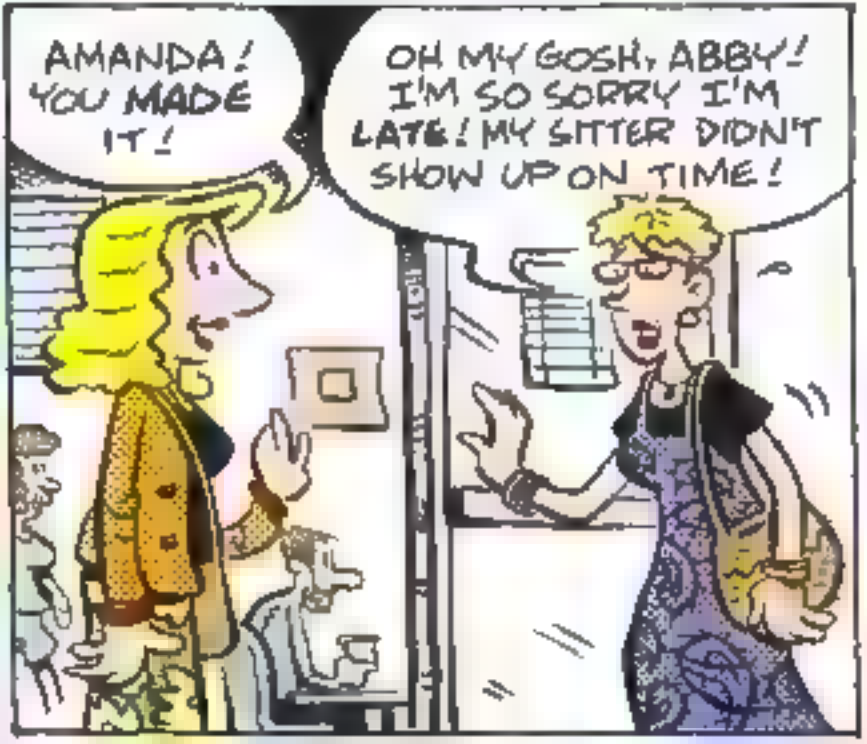

WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO, ABBY?
I'M MEETING A WOMAN FROM MY BOOK GROUP FOR COFFEE, JANICE!

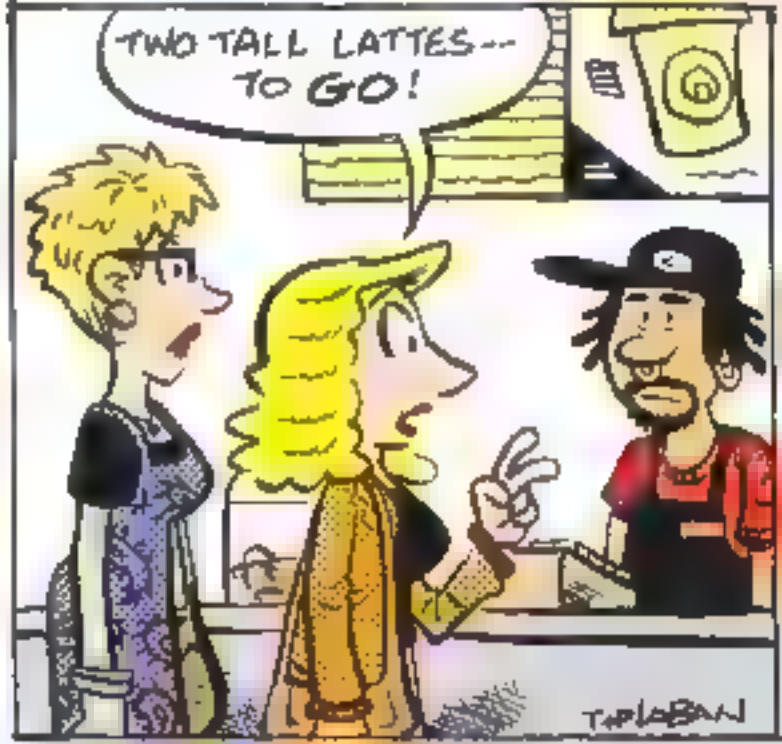
IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE'VE GOTTEN TOGETHER, SO I WANT TO MAKE SURE I'M ON TIME!

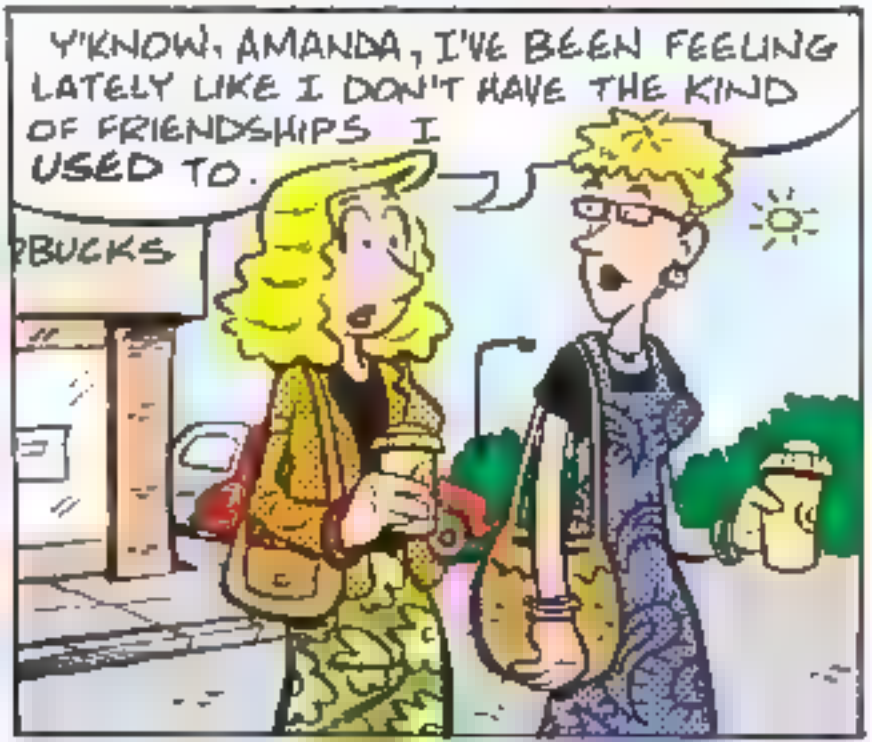



OH, GOSH -- IT'S THE FIRST TIME AMANDA AND I ARE GETTING TOGETHER AND I'M 20 MINUTES LATE!
STAR
7/22
I SURE HOPE SHE'S NOT MAD AT ME!
HMM... IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SHE'S EVEN HERE YET!
HUMPH! IT BUGS ME WHEN PEOPLE AREN'T ON TIME!


AMANDA! YOU MADE IT!
OH MY GOSH, ABBY! I'M SO SORRY I'M LATE! MY SITTER DIDN'T SHOW UP ON TIME!

DO YOU STILL WANT TO HAVE COFFEE?
YEAH-- BUT I'VE ONLY GOT 15 MINUTES BEFORE I NEED TO GET BACK TO WORK!
7/23


TWO TALL LATTES-- TO GO!
TAPLABAN



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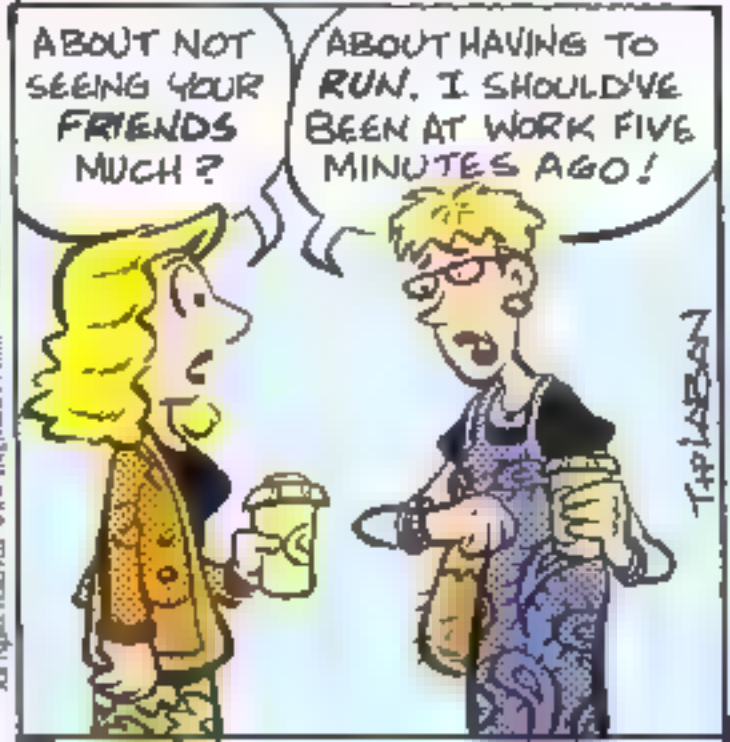
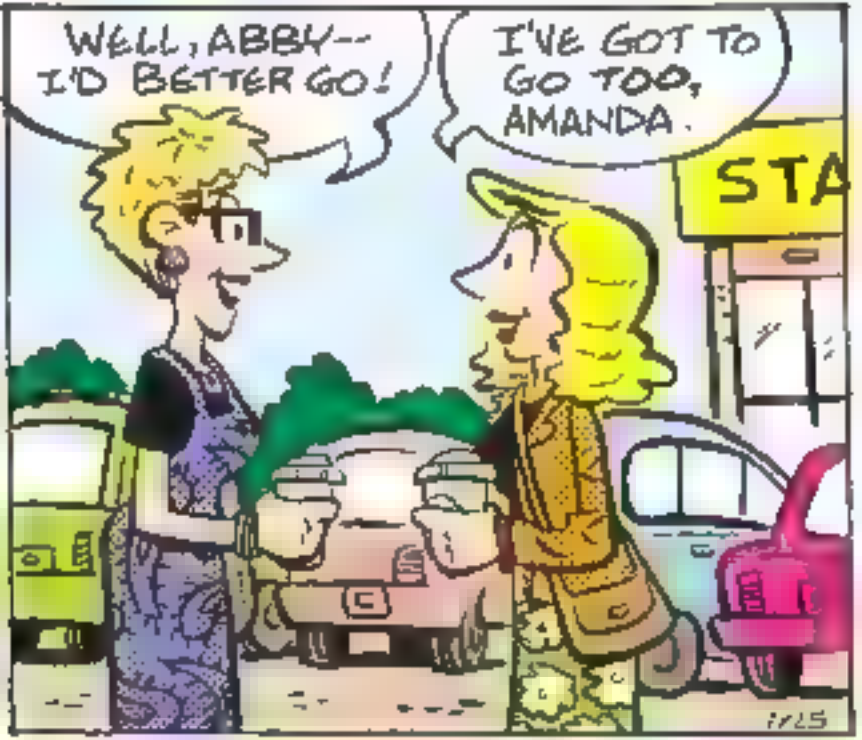
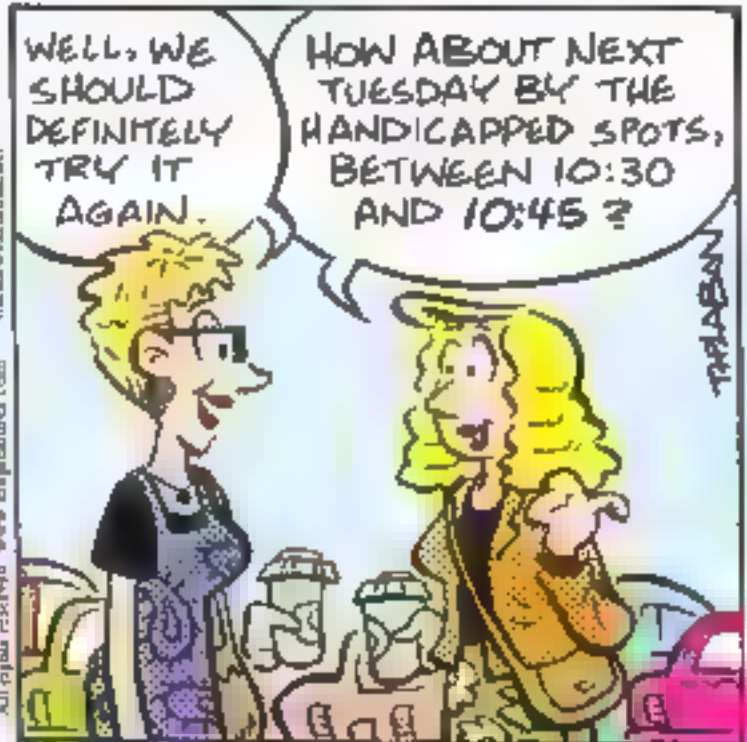
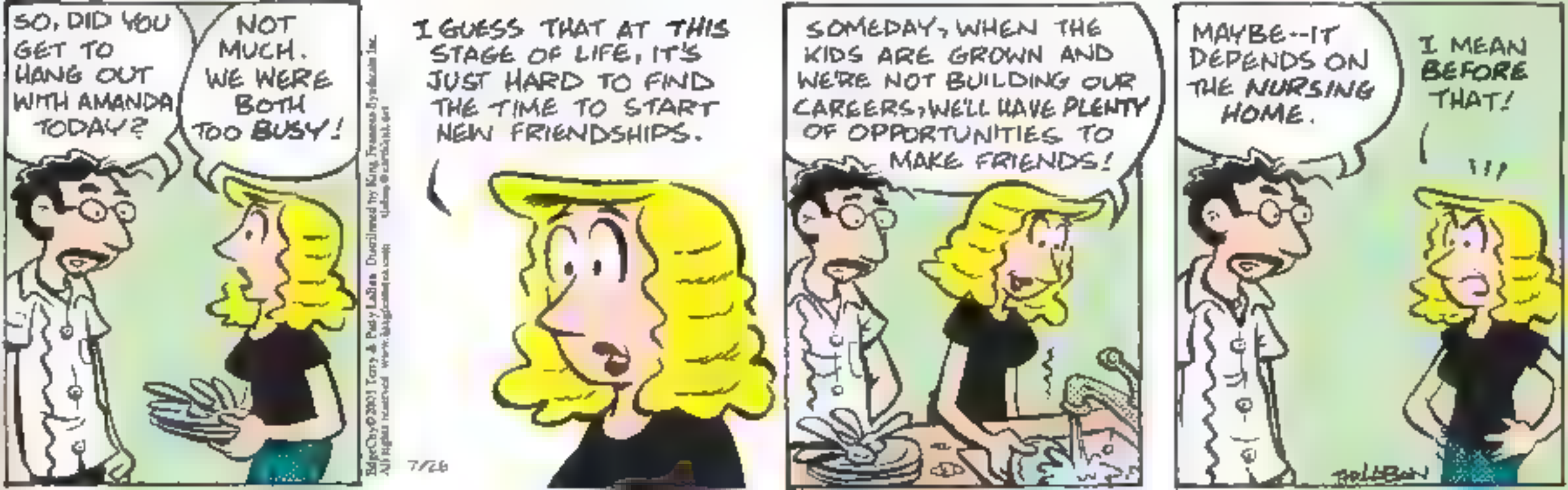
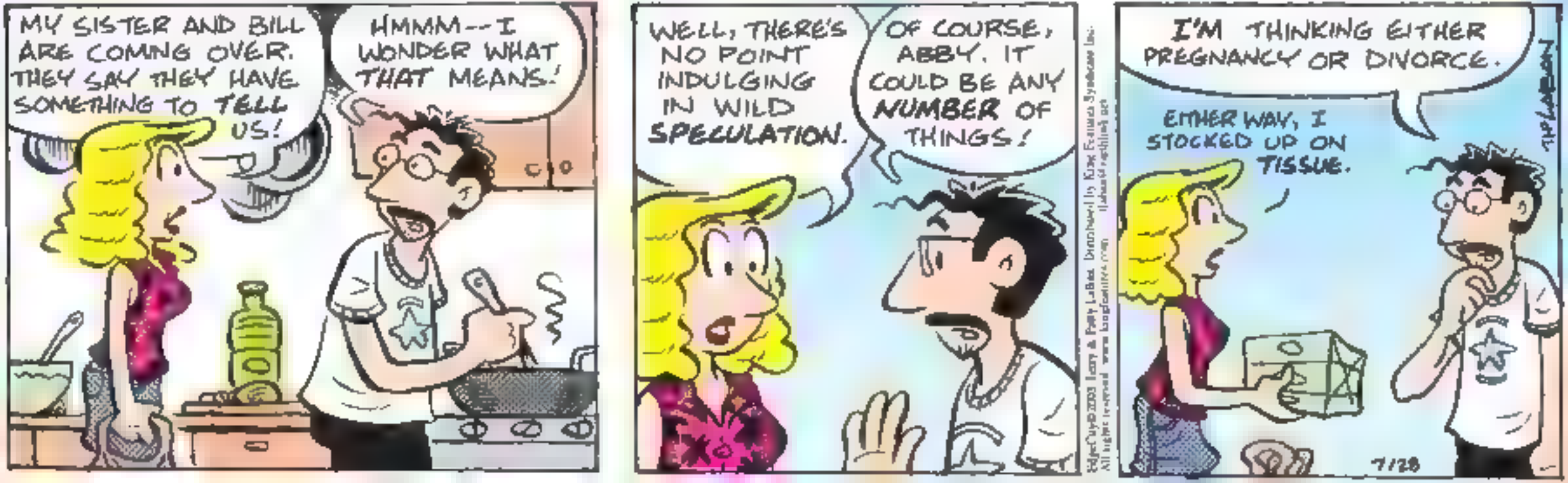


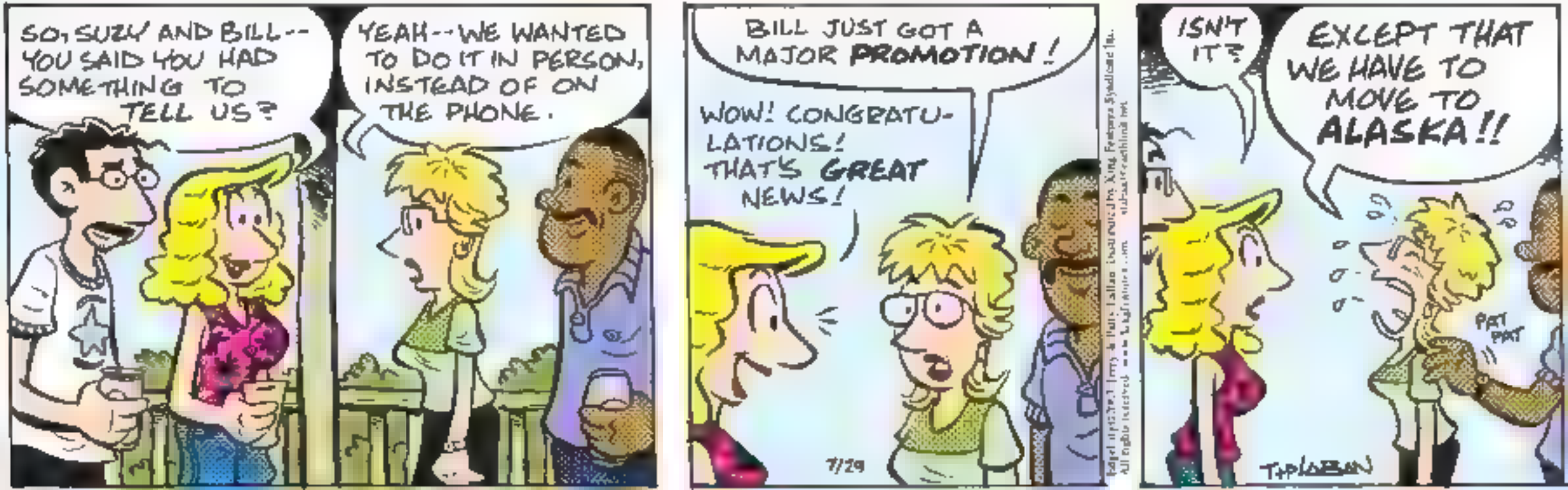

WELL, ABBY-- I'D BETTER GO!
I'VE GOT TO GO TOO, AMANDA.
STA
1/25

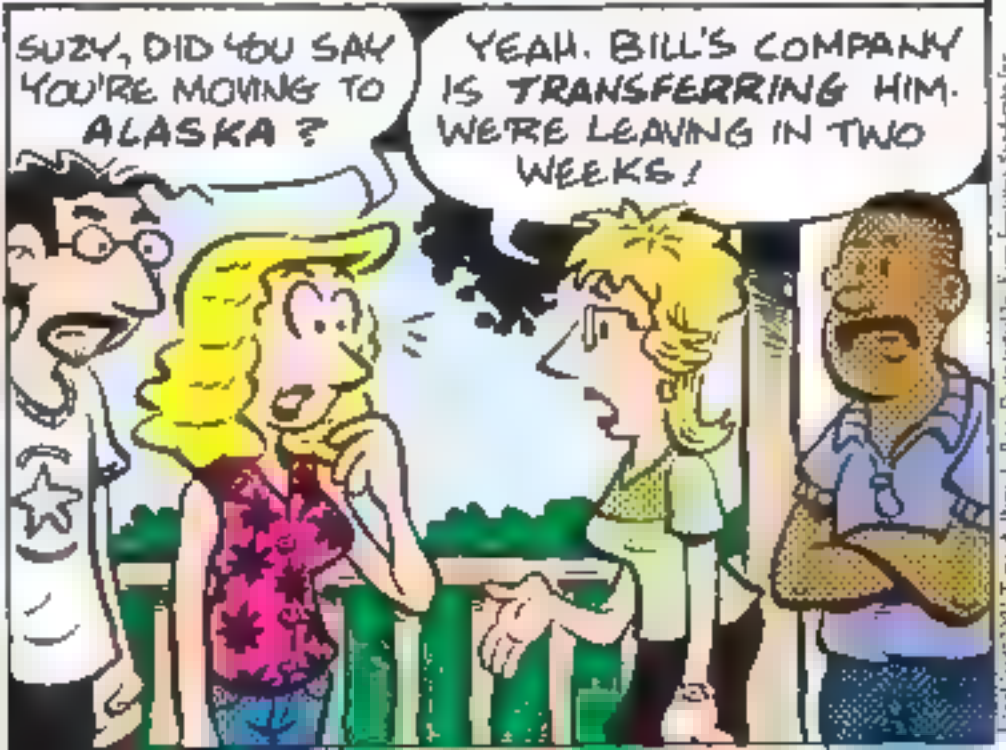
IT WAS NICE TAKING A BREAK AND HANGING OUT A LITTLE.
YEAH-- EVEN IF ALL WE HAD TIME FOR WAS 15 MINUTES IN THE COFFEE-SHOP PARKING LOT!


WELL, WE SHOULD DEFINITELY TRY IT AGAIN.
HOW ABOUT NEXT TUESDAY BY THE HANDICAPPED SPOTS, BETWEEN 10:30 AND 10:45?


SO, DID YOU GET TO HANG OUT WITH AMANDA TODAY?
NOT MUCH. WE WERE BOTH TOO BUSY!
I GUESS THAT AT THIS STAGE OF LIFE, IT'S JUST HARD TO FIND THE TIME TO START NEW FRIENDSHIPS.
SOMEDAY, WHEN THE KIDS ARE GROWN AND WE'RE NOT BUILDING OUR CAREERS, WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE FRIENDS!
MAYBE--IT DEPENDS ON THE NURSING HOME.
I MEAN BEFORE THAT!
7/26


MY SISTER AND BILL ARE COMING OVER. THEY SAY THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL US!
HMMM--I WONDER WHAT THAT MEANS!
WELL, THERE'S NO POINT INDULGING IN WILD SPECULATION.
OF COURSE, ABBY. IT COULD BE ANY NUMBER OF THINGS!
I'M THINKING EITHER PREGNANCY OR DIVORCE.
EITHER WAY, I STOCKED UP ON TISSUE.
7/28


SO, SUZY AND BILL-- YOU SAID YOU HAD SOMETHING TO TELL US?
YEAH--WE WANTED TO DO IT IN PERSON, INSTEAD OF ON THE PHONE.
BILL JUST GOT A MAJOR PROMOTION!
WOW! CONGRATULATIONS! THAT'S GREAT NEWS!
7/29
ISN'T IT?
EXCEPT THAT WE HAVE TO MOVE TO ALASKA!!
PAT PAT
TYPLOBAN


SUZY, DID YOU SAY YOU'RE MOVING TO ALASKA?
YEAH. BILL'S COMPANY IS TRANSFERRING HIM. WE'RE LEAVING IN TWO WEEKS!

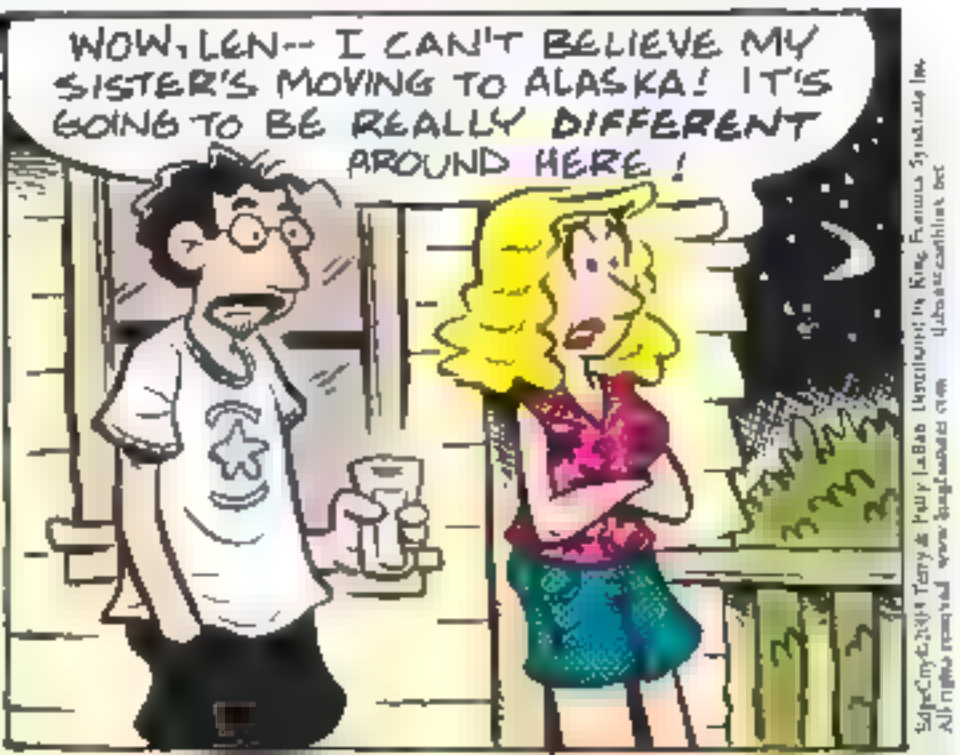
OH, MY GOSH! YOU'RE JUST GOING TO PULL UP STAKES AND GO?
IT'S A BIG PROMOTION, ABBY. IT'LL ALL WORK OUT.

ONCE WE SMOKE ENOUGH MEAT TO LAST THE... =CHOKE!!...WINTER!
C'MON NOW, HON -- THERE ARE PLENTY OF SUPER-MARKETS IN ANCHORAGE!

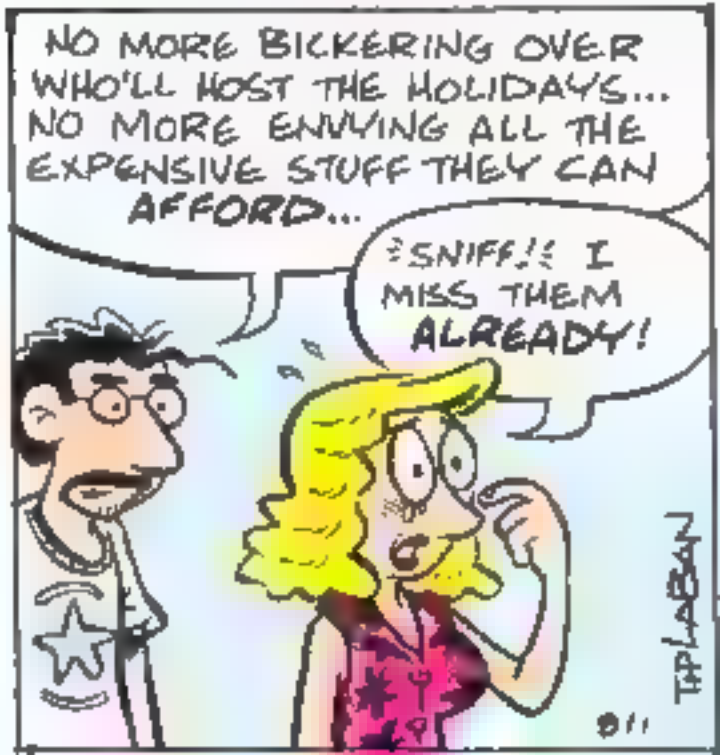
MOM, IT'S ABBY! SUZY TOLD US LAST NIGHT THAT SHE AND BILL ARE MOVING TO ALASKA!
I KNOW! SHE TOLD ME YESTERDAY.

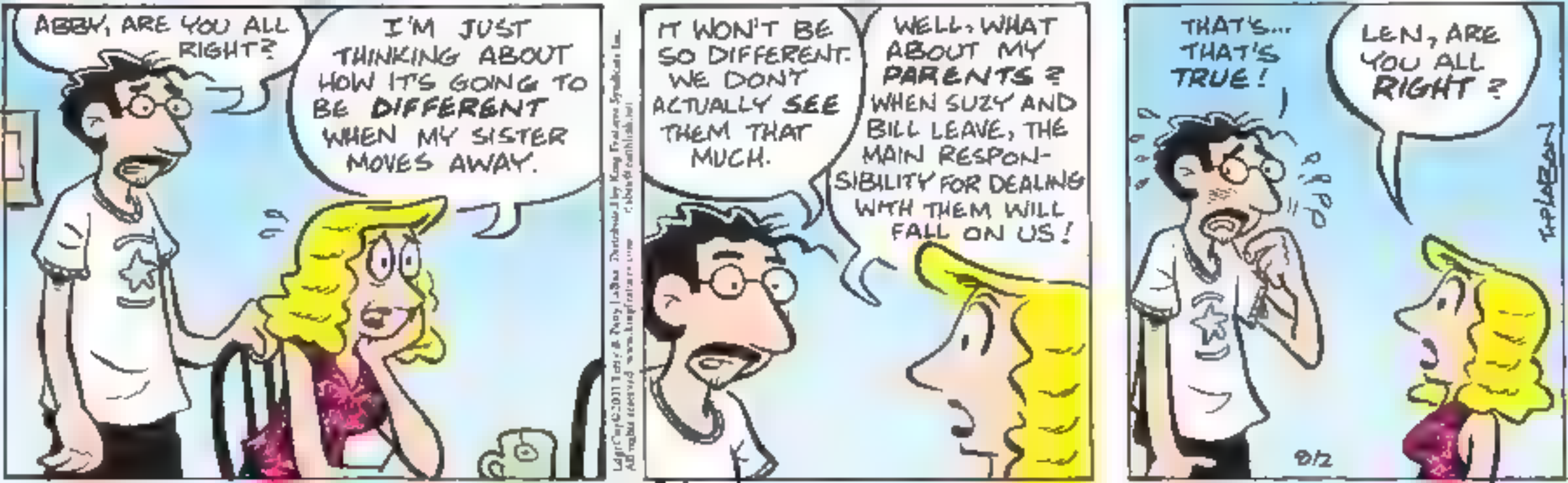
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?
WELL, AT FIRST I WAS UPSET. I LOVE HAVING BOTH YOU AND YOUR SISTER CLOSE BY.
7/31

BUT THEN I REALIZED THAT THIS IS A GREAT INCENTIVE FOR ME TO FINALLY ENTER THE IDITAROD!
GET THESE DOGS OUTTA HERE, DARN IT!


WOW, LEN-- I CAN'T BELIEVE MY SISTER'S MOVING TO ALASKA! IT'S GOING TO BE REALLY DIFFERENT AROUND HERE!

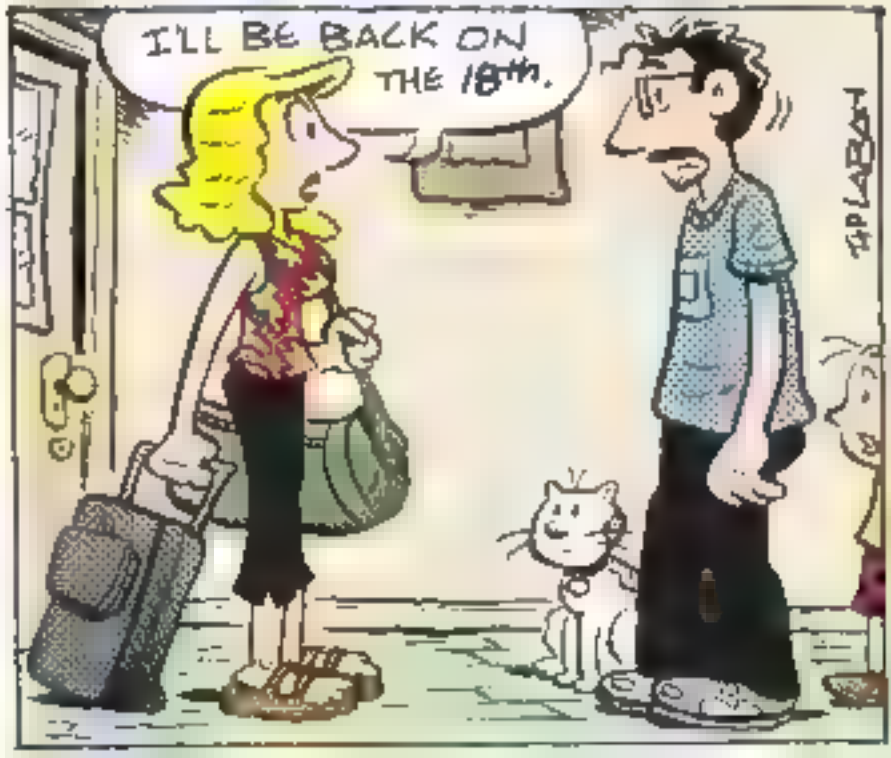
NO MORE CASUAL WEEKEND GET-TOGETHERS... NO MORE BEING INVOLVED WITH OUR NIECE AND NEPHEW...

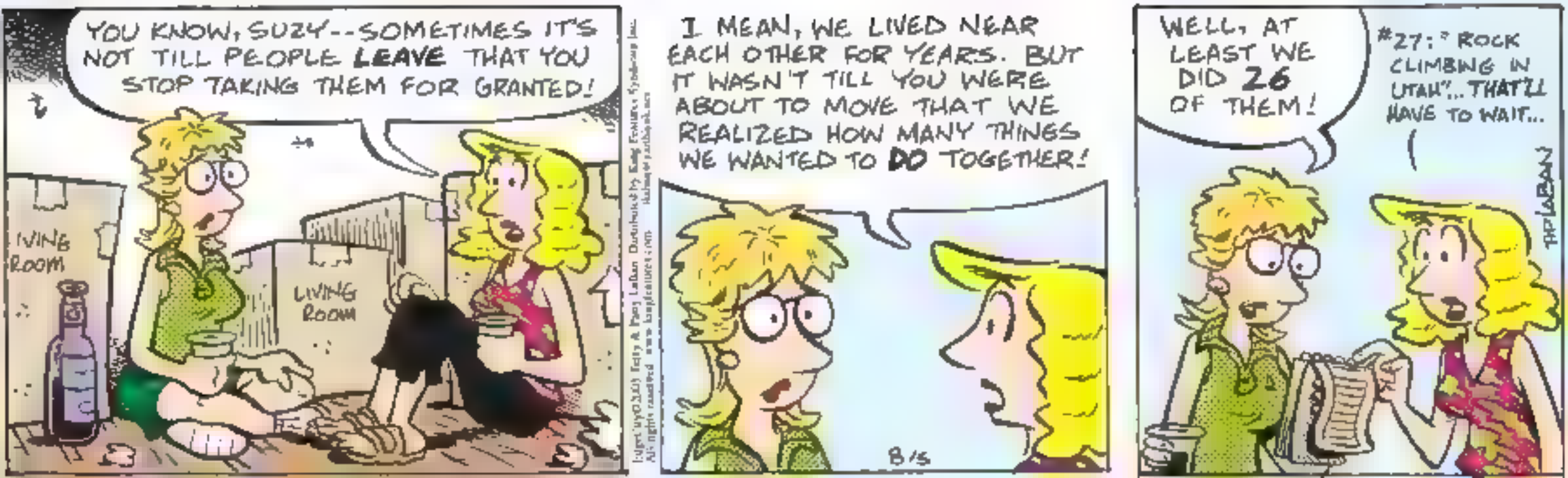

NO MORE BICKERING OVER WHO'LL HOST THE HOLIDAYS... NO MORE ENVYING ALL THE EXPENSIVE STUFF THEY CAN AFFORD...
SNIFF!! I MISS THEM ALREADY!
TAPLABAN

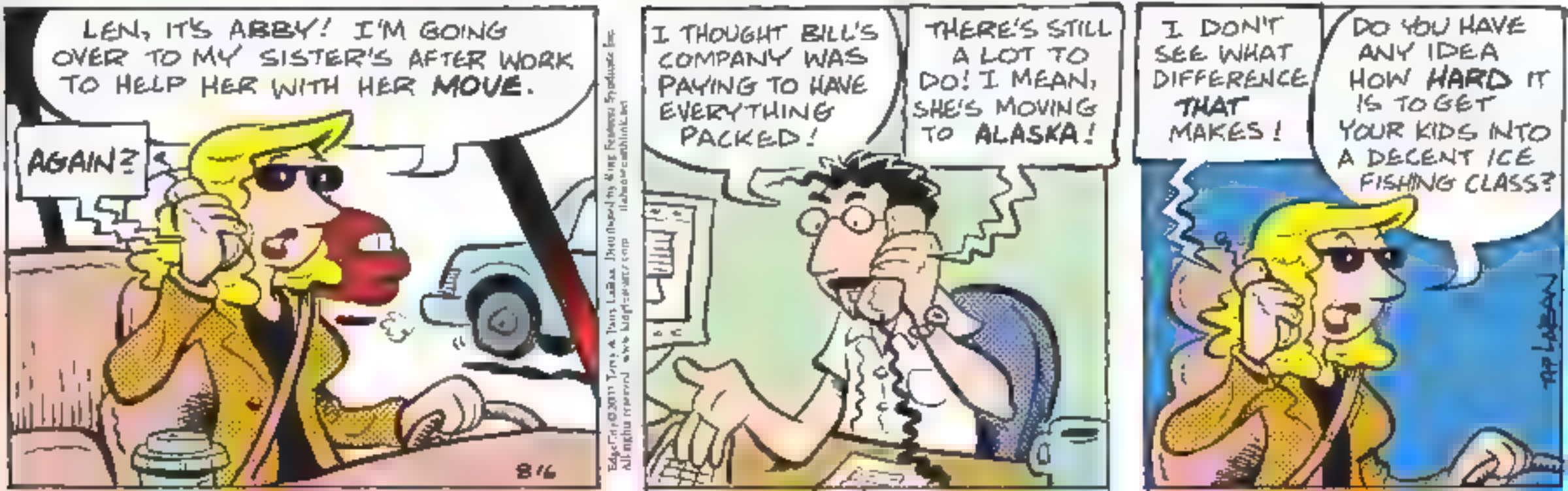

ABBY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M JUST THINKING ABOUT HOW IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFERENT WHEN MY SISTER MOVES AWAY.
IT WON'T BE SO DIFFERENT. WE DON'T ACTUALLY SEE THEM THAT MUCH.
WELL, WHAT ABOUT MY PARENTS? WHEN SUZY AND BILL LEAVE, THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH THEM WILL FALL ON US!
THAT'S... THAT'S TRUE!
LEN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
9/12

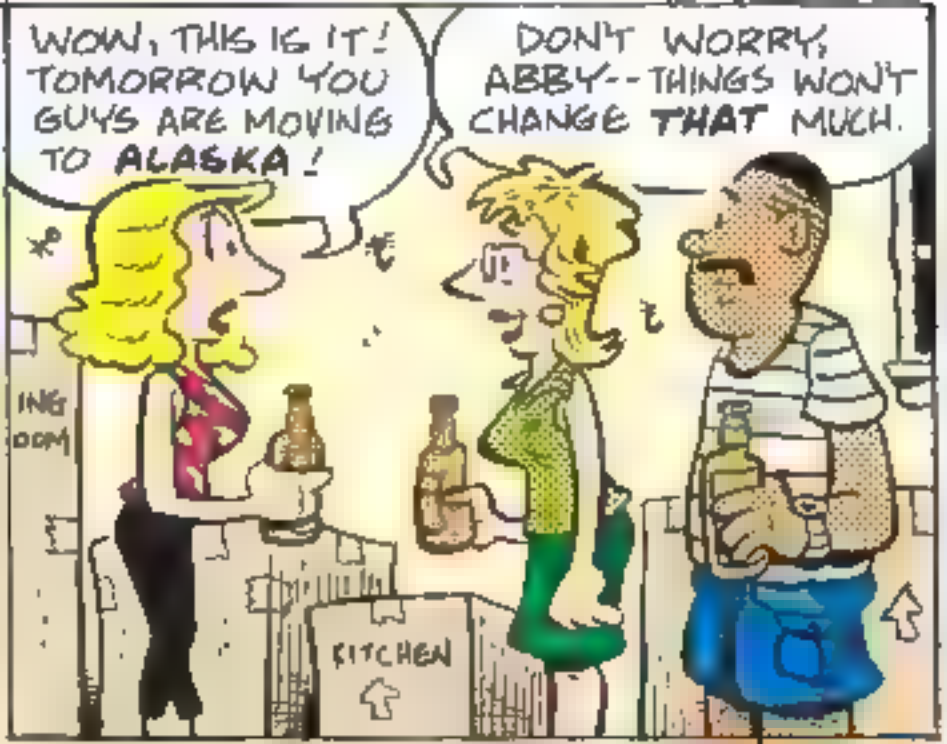
YOU KNOW, LEN--MY SISTER'S MOVING TO ALASKA IN TWO WEEKS.
8/14

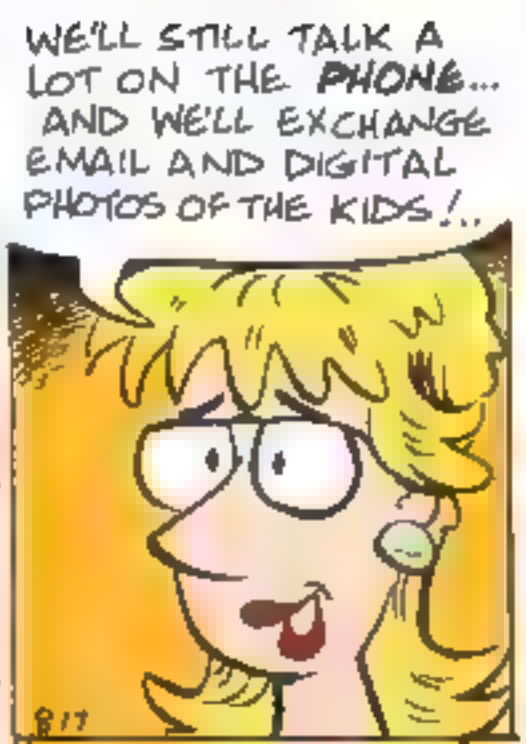
I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE TO SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME WITH HER BEFORE SHE GOES.
SURE. WHEN WERE YOU THINKING ABOUT?


I'LL BE BACK ON THE 18th.
JP LABAN

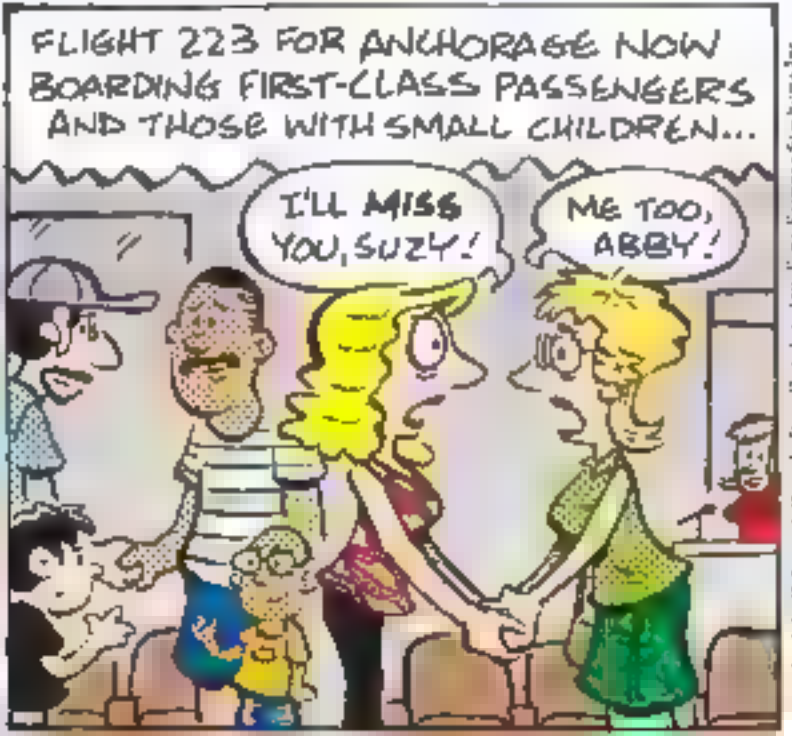

YOU KNOW, SUZY--SOMETIMES IT'S NOT TILL PEOPLE LEAVE THAT YOU STOP TAKING THEM FOR GRANTED!
LIVING ROOM
LIVING ROOM
I MEAN, WE LIVED NEAR EACH OTHER FOR YEARS. BUT IT WASN'T TILL YOU WERE ABOUT TO MOVE THAT WE REALIZED HOW MANY THINGS WE WANTED TO DO TOGETHER!
8/5
WELL, AT LEAST WE DID 26 OF THEM!
#27: "ROCK CLIMBING IN UTAH"... THAT'LL HAVE TO WAIT...
THP/LaBAN


LEN, IT'S ABBY! I'M GOING OVER TO MY SISTER'S AFTER WORK TO HELP HER WITH HER MOVE.
AGAIN?
8/6
I THOUGHT BILL'S COMPANY WAS PAYING TO HAVE EVERYTHING PACKED!
THERE'S STILL A LOT TO DO! I MEAN, SHE'S MOVING TO ALASKA!
I DON'T SEE WHAT DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO GET YOUR KIDS INTO A DECENT ICE FISHING CLASS?
TAP LUBBAN

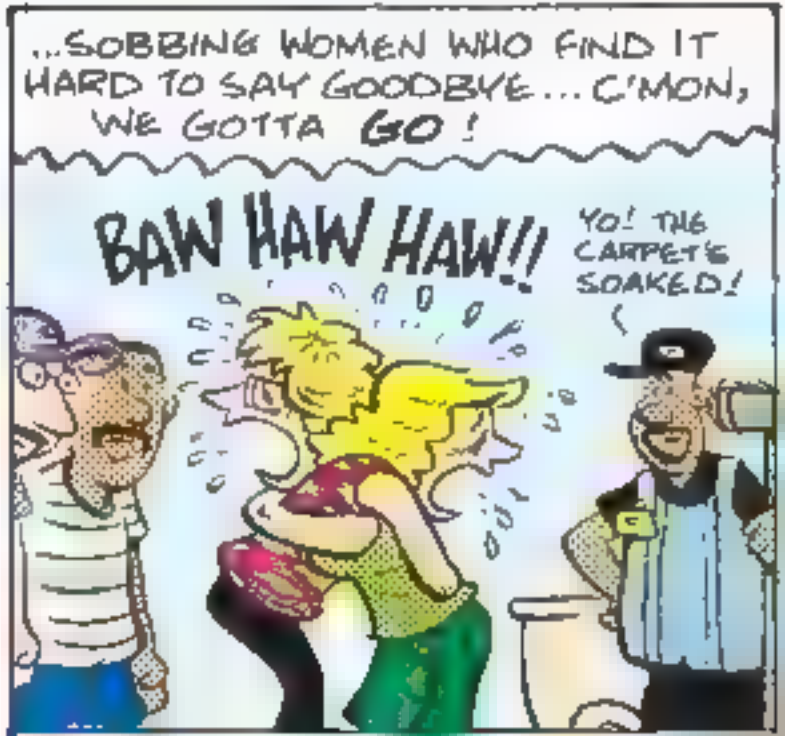

WOW, THIS IS IT! TOMORROW YOU GUYS ARE MOVING TO ALASKA!
DON'T WORRY, ABBY--THINGS WON'T CHANGE THAT MUCH.
KITCHEN

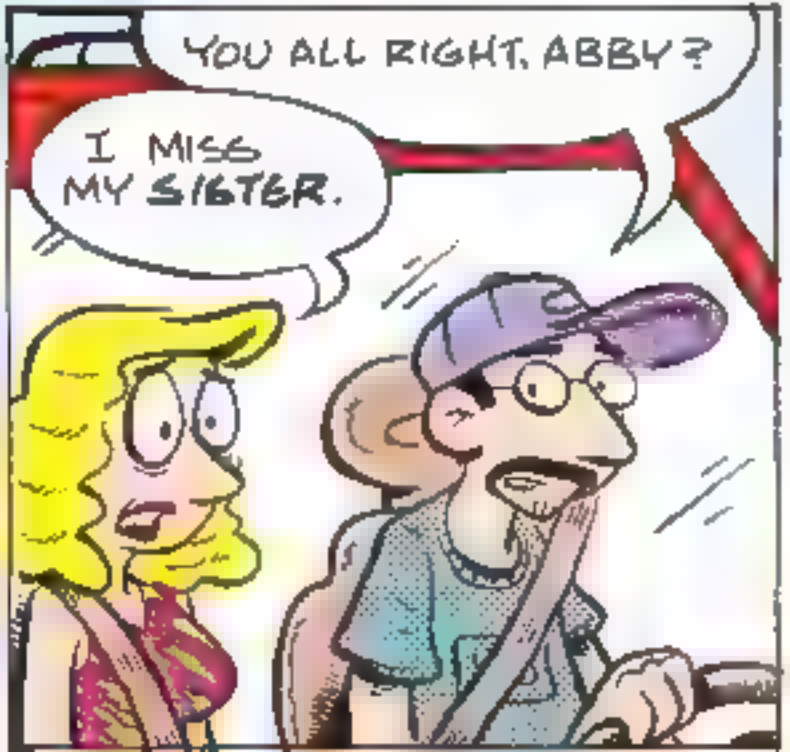

WE'LL STILL TALK A LOT ON THE PHONE... AND WE'LL EXCHANGE EMAIL AND DIGITAL PHOTOS OF THE KIDS!..

SUZY, SOMETIMES I DON'T THINK YOU REALIZE HOW FAR AWAY YOU'LL BE!
ALSO, I'M PLANNING TO FLY IN ONCE A MONTH FOR BOOK GROUP!
HEH... HONEY, WE'LL HAVE TO SEE HOW THAT WORKS OUT...

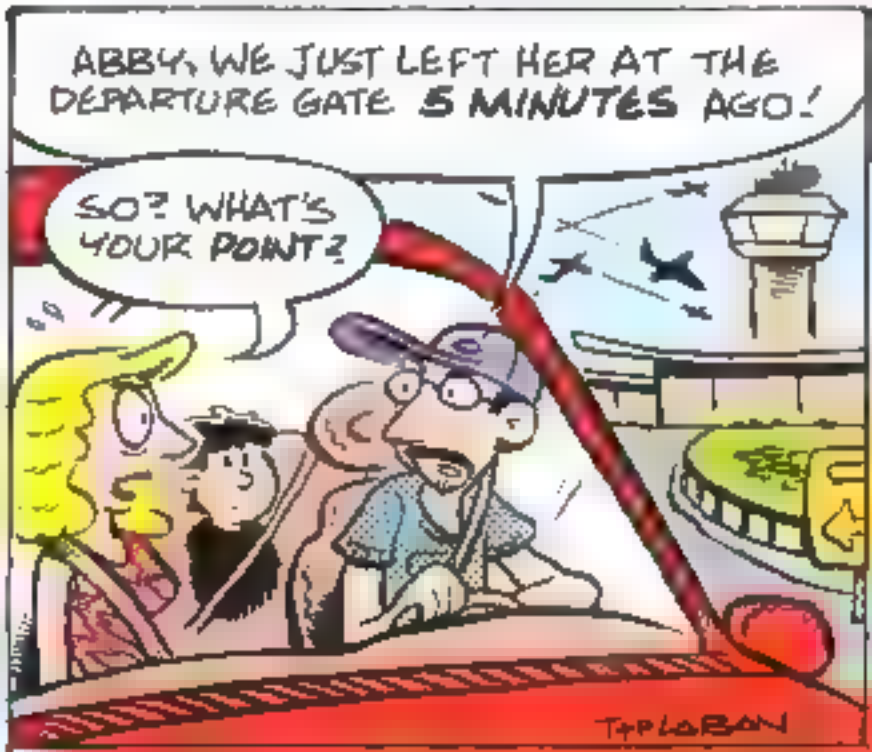

FLIGHT 223 FOR ANCHORAGE NOW BOARDING FIRST-CLASS PASSENGERS AND THOSE WITH SMALL CHILDREN...
I'LL MISS YOU, SUZY!
ME TOO, ABBY!

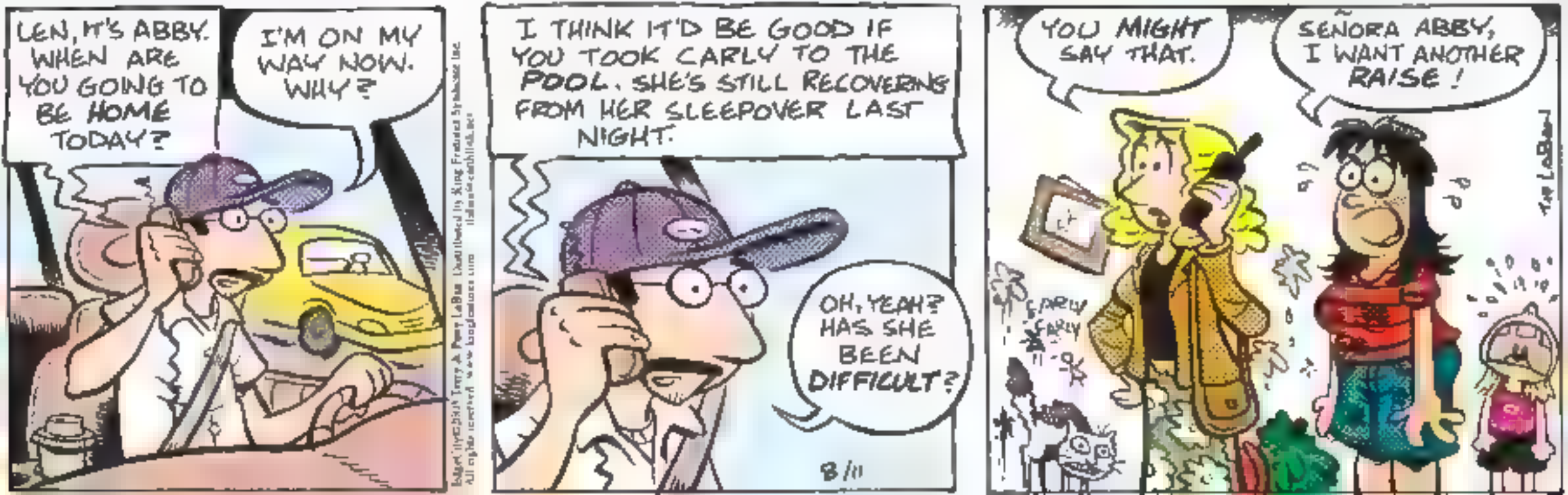
...PASSENGERS IN ROWS 26-15... PASSENGERS IN ALL ROWS!...
BAW!

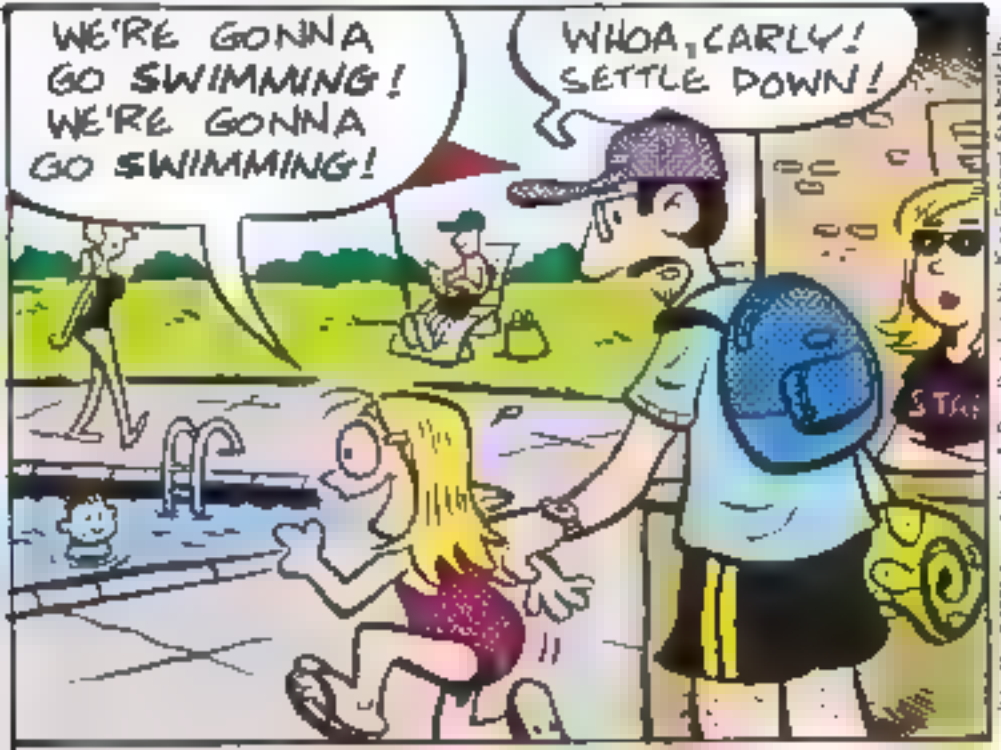

...SOBBING WOMEN WHO FIND IT HARD TO SAY GOODBYE... C'MON, WE GOTTA GO!
BAW HAW HAW!!
YO! THE CARPET'S SOAKED!


YOU ALL RIGHT, ABBY?
I MISS MY SISTER.

EVER SINCE SHE LEFT I FEEL SO MUCH MORE ISOLATED AND LONELY!
8/9


ABBY, WE JUST LEFT HER AT THE DEPARTURE GATE 5 MINUTES AGO!
SO? WHAT'S YOUR POINT?
TYPLOBAN


LEN, IT'S ABBY. WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO BE HOME TODAY?
I'M ON MY WAY NOW. WHY?
I THINK IT'D BE GOOD IF YOU TOOK CARLY TO THE POOL. SHE'S STILL RECOVERING FROM HER SLEEPOVER LAST NIGHT.
OH, YEAH? HAS SHE BEEN DIFFICULT?
8/11
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.
SEÑORA ABBY, I WANT ANOTHER RAISE!
CARLY CARLY



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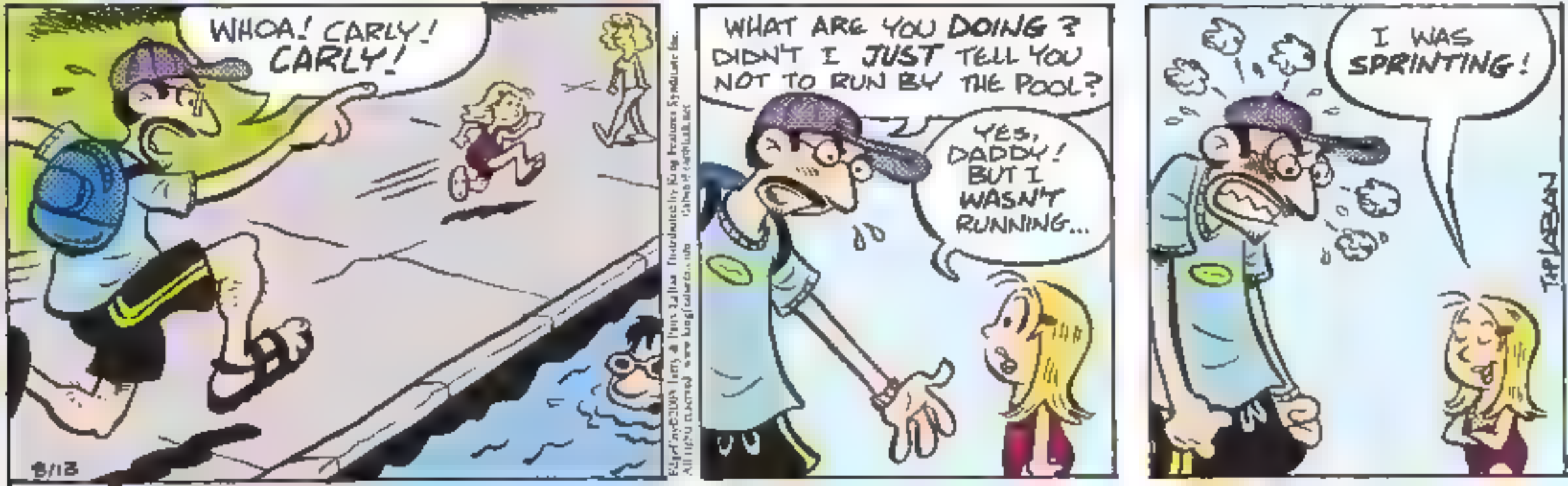
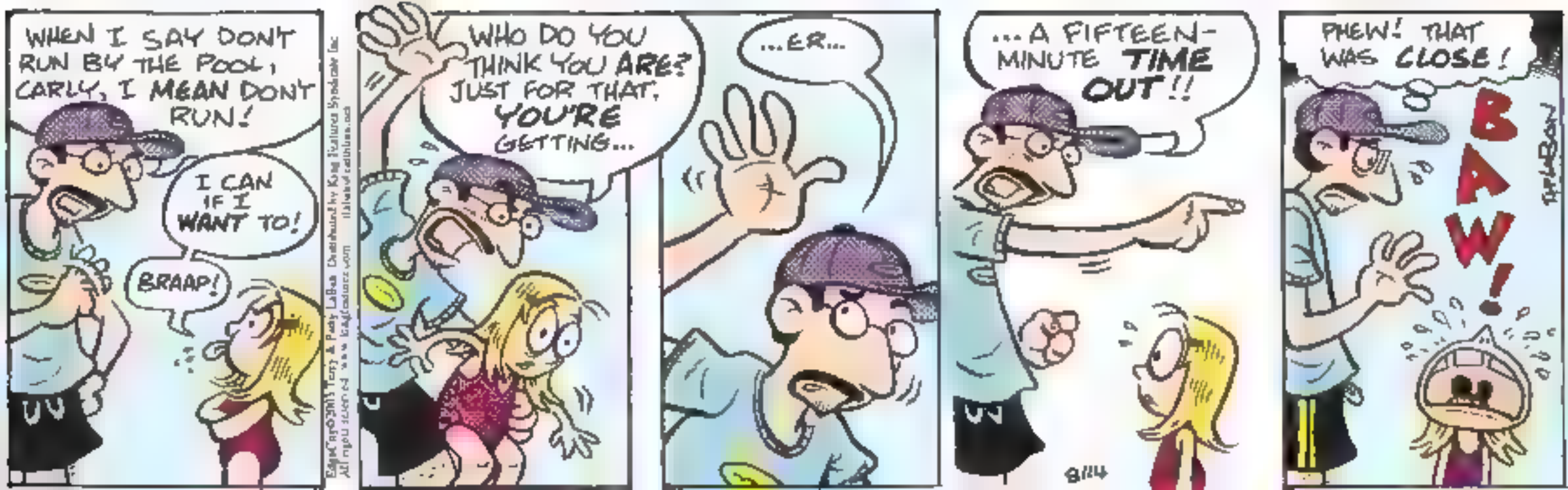
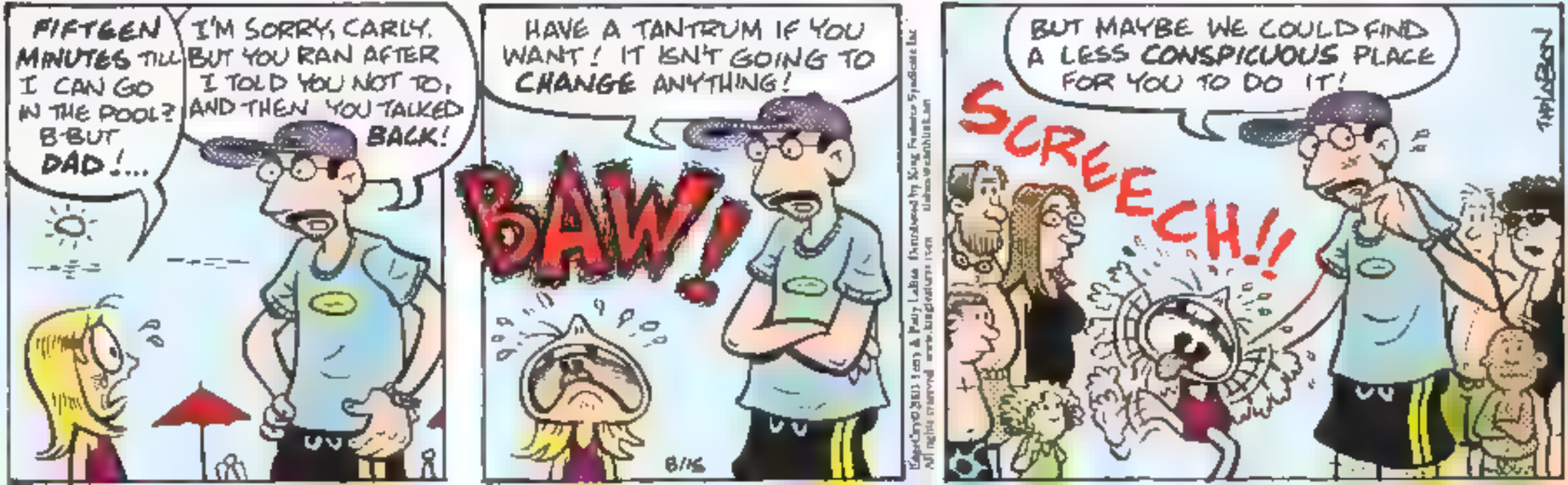

WHOA! CARLY! CARLY!
8/18
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? DIDN'T I JUST TELL YOU NOT TO RUN BY THE POOL?
YES, DADDY! BUT I WASN'T RUNNING...
I WAS SPRINTING!
TAPLIN

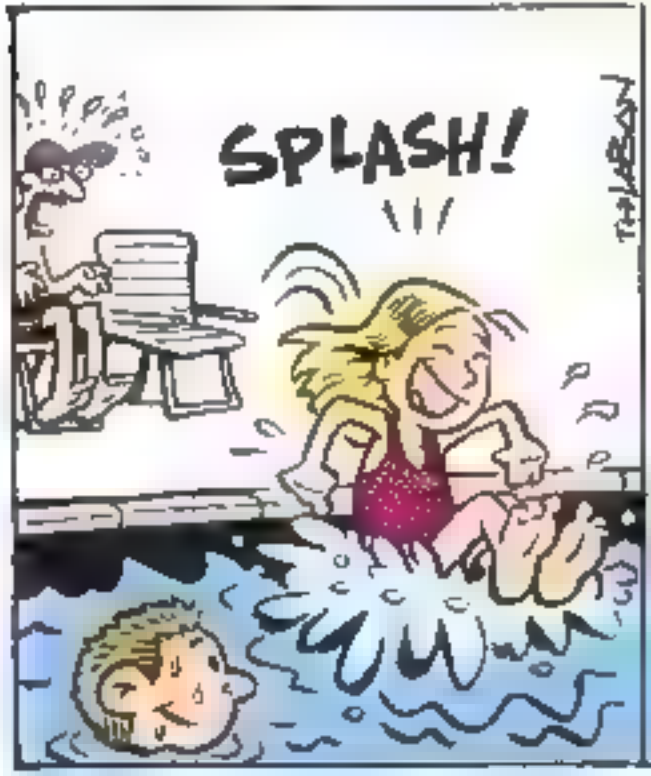

WHEN I SAY DON'T RUN BY THE POOL, CARLY, I MEAN DON'T RUN!
I CAN IF I WANT TO!
BRAAP!
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? JUST FOR THAT, YOU'RE GETTING...
...ER...
...A FIFTEEN-MINUTE TIME OUT!!
8/14
PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE!
BAW!
TAYLOR


FIFTEEN MINUTES TILL I CAN GO IN THE POOL? B-BUT DAD!...
I'M SORRY, CARLY. BUT YOU RAN AFTER I TOLD YOU NOT TO, AND THEN YOU TALKED BACK!
HAVE A TANTRUM IF YOU WANT! IT ISN'T GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING!
BAW!
BUT MAYBE WE COULD FIND A LESS CONSPICUOUS PLACE FOR YOU TO DO IT!
SCREECH!!

I FEEL BAD ABOUT MAKING CARLY WAIT 15 MINUTES BEFORE GOING IN THE POOL. BUT SHE WAS TOTALLY DISRESPECTFUL!

KIDS HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'LL BE CONSEQUENCES IF THEY MISBEHAVE!

IF I STICK TO MY GUNS NOW, MAYBE NEXT TIME SHE'LL LISTEN TO M...
8/16


SPLASH!
THALABAN

CARLY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE POOL?! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HAVING A TIMEOUT!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT, DADDY! IT'S CHILD ABUSE!
THAT'S IT, YOUNG LADY! I'VE HAD IT! WE'RE LEAVING!!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GETS INTO YOU!
EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT I CAN'T STAND BY AND LET YOU ABUSE THAT CHILD!
8/18

SIR, I CANNOT BE A SILENT WITNESS TO CHILD ABUSE!
LADY, I GAVE HER A TIMEOUT! THAT DOESN'T CONSTITUTE CHILD ABUSE!
YOU OUGHT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON BEFORE YOU START CONFRONTING PEOPLE!
CAN YOU BELIEVE THE WAY THAT MAN TREATS HIS DAUGHTER?
IT MAKES ME WANT TO CRY!

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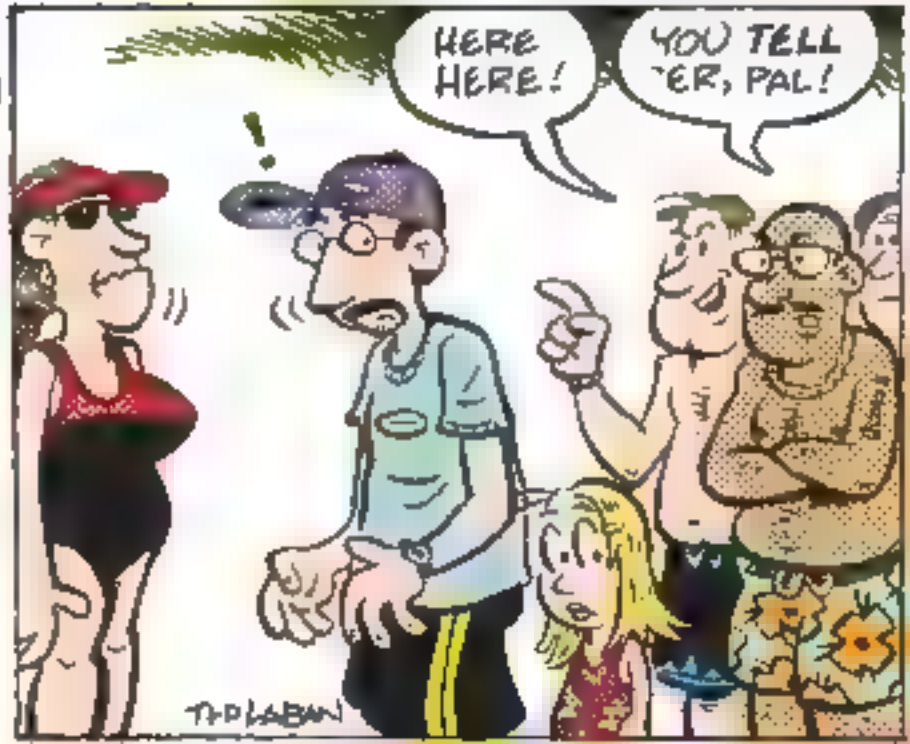

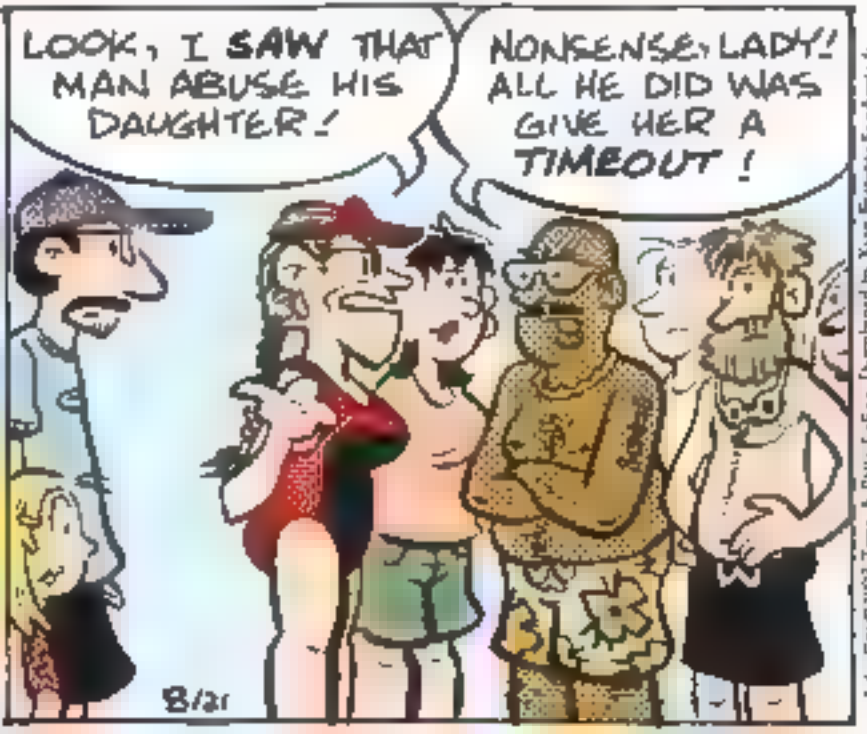

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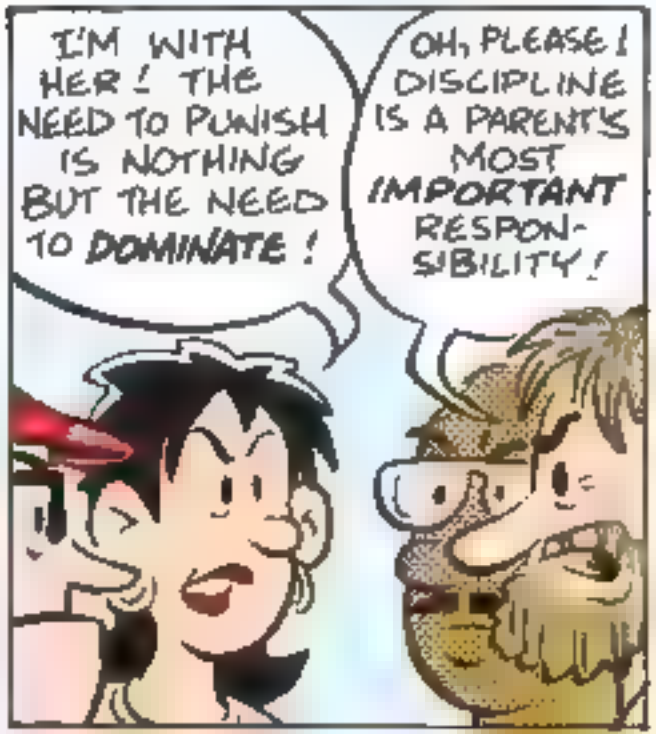
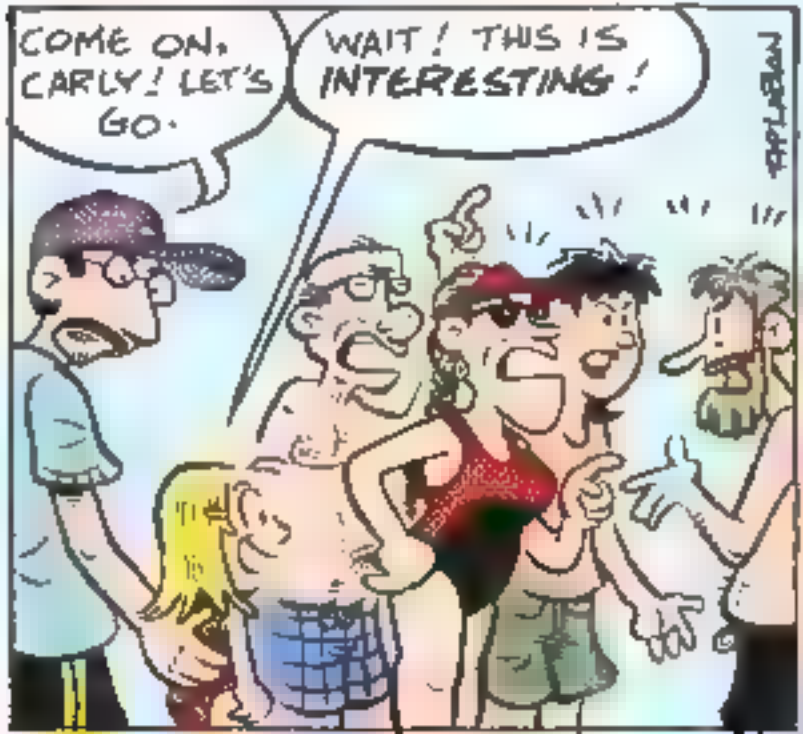
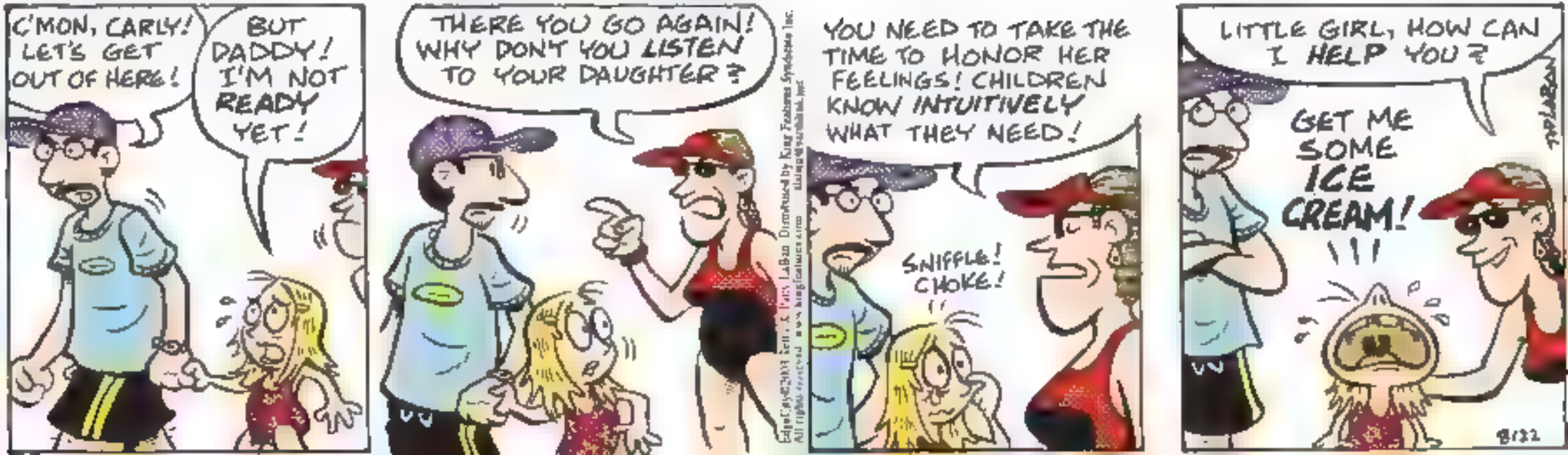
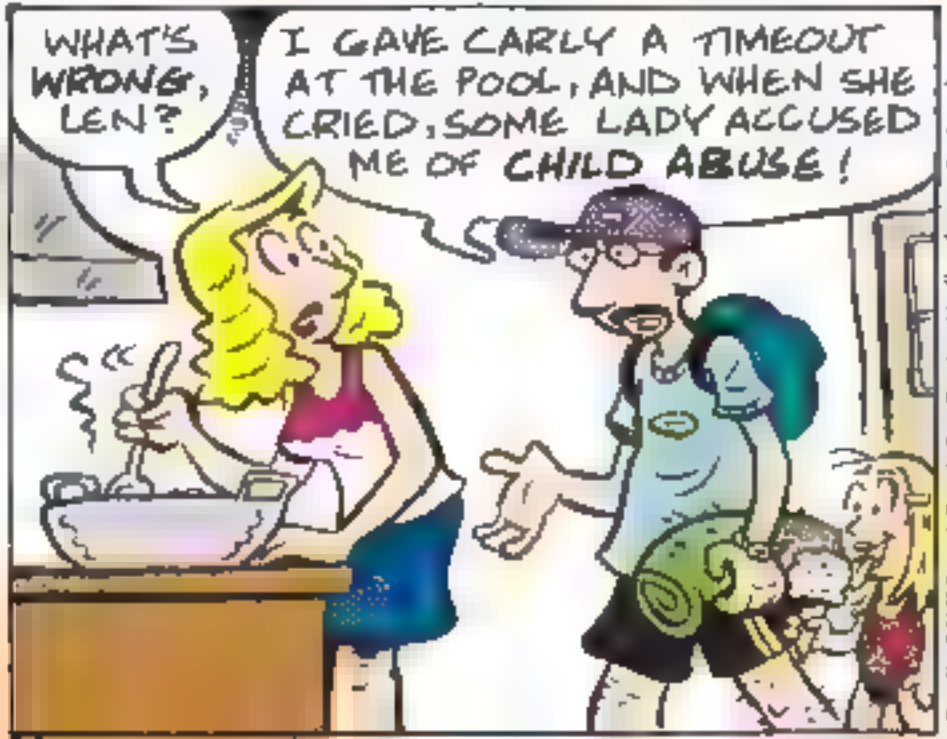


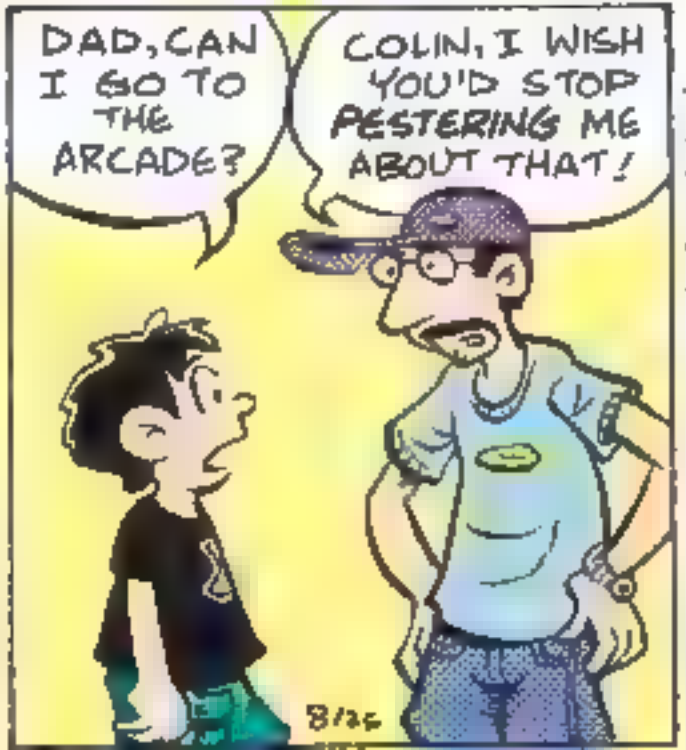



C'MON, CARLY! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
BUT DADDY! I'M NOT READY YET!
THERE YOU GO AGAIN! WHY DON'T YOU LISTEN TO YOUR DAUGHTER?
YOU NEED TO TAKE THE TIME TO HONOR HER FEELINGS! CHILDREN KNOW INTUITIVELY WHAT THEY NEED!
SNIFFLE! CHOKE!
LITTLE GIRL, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
GET ME SOME ICE CREAM!
8/22


WHAT'S WRONG, LEN?
I GAVE CARLY A TIMEOUT AT THE POOL, AND WHEN SHE CRIED, SOME LADY ACCUSED ME OF CHILD ABUSE!

IT WAS TOTALLY RIDICULOUS, ABBY!
I'M SURE. SOMETIMES PEOPLE JUST GET CARRIED AWAY.
8/22

STILL, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S GOOD FOR PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP IF THEY SEE SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS THEM?
YEAH. JUST NOT TO ME!
TOPLABON



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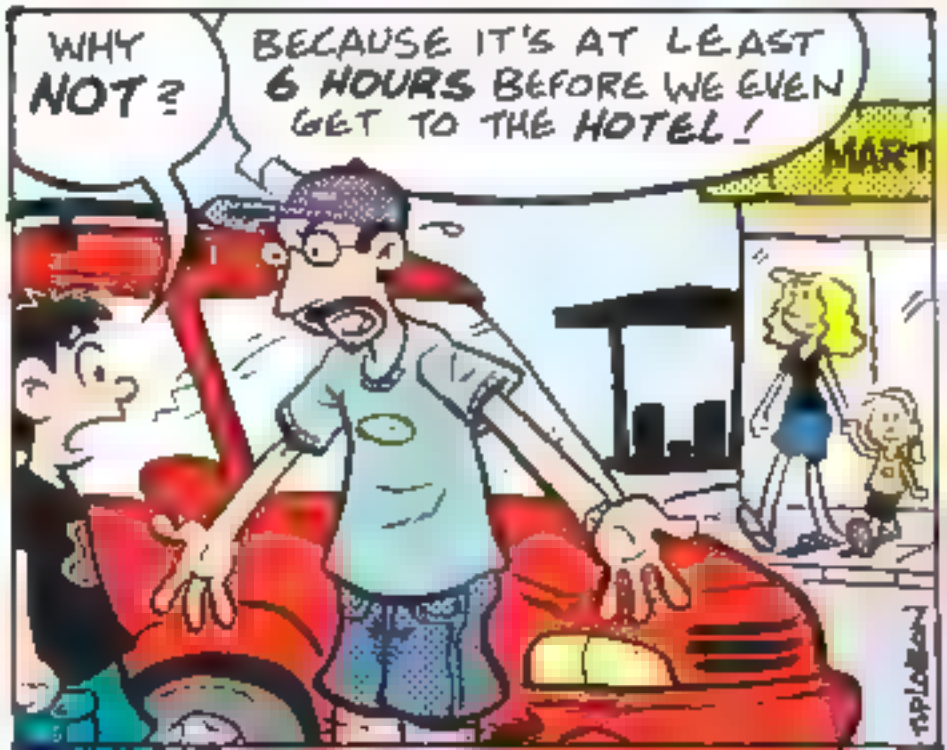
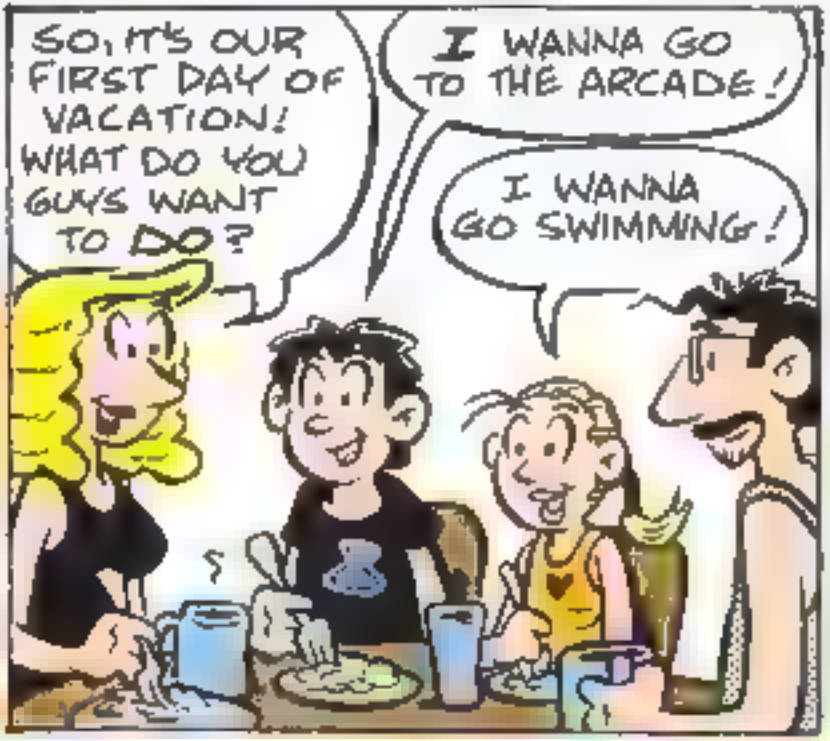


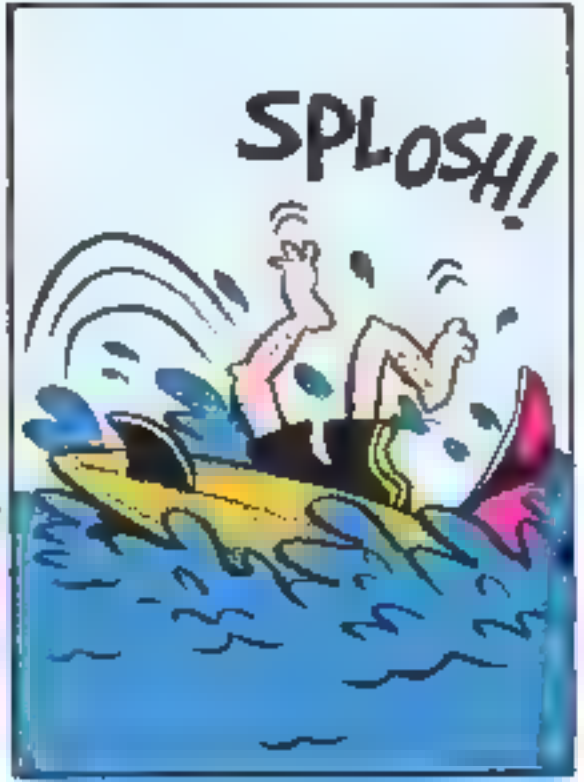

SO, IT'S OUR FIRST DAY OF VACATION! WHAT DO YOU GUYS WANT TO DO?
I WANNA GO TO THE ARCADE!
I WANNA GO SWIMMING!

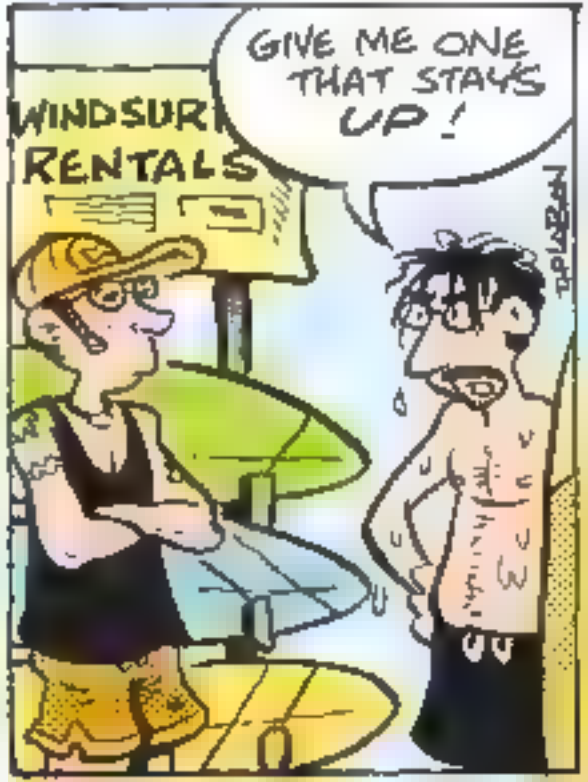
PERSONALLY, I'D LIKE TO GO WINDSURFING AND MAYBE PLAY A LITTLE GOLF.
WELL, I THINK IT'D BE NICE TO FIND SOME TIME TO SPEND TOGETHER AS A FAMILY!

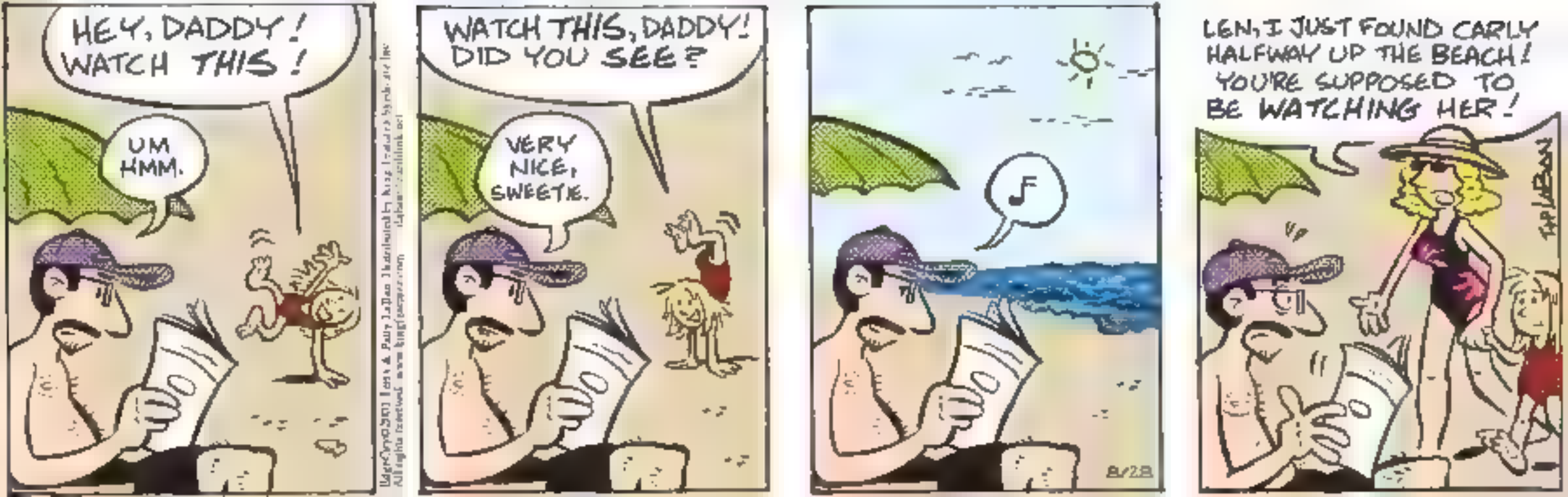
WHAT?
8/26

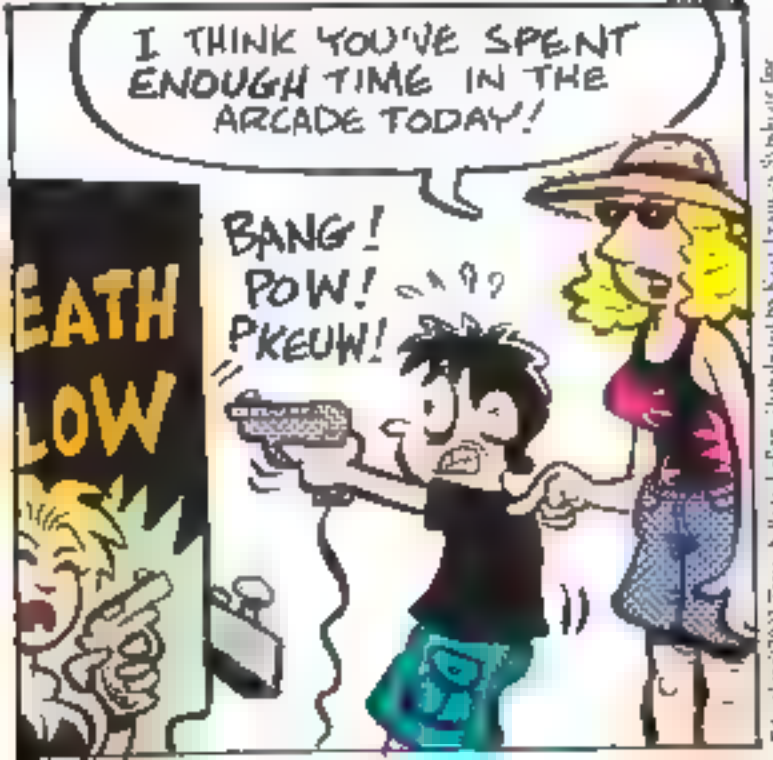
SPLASH!

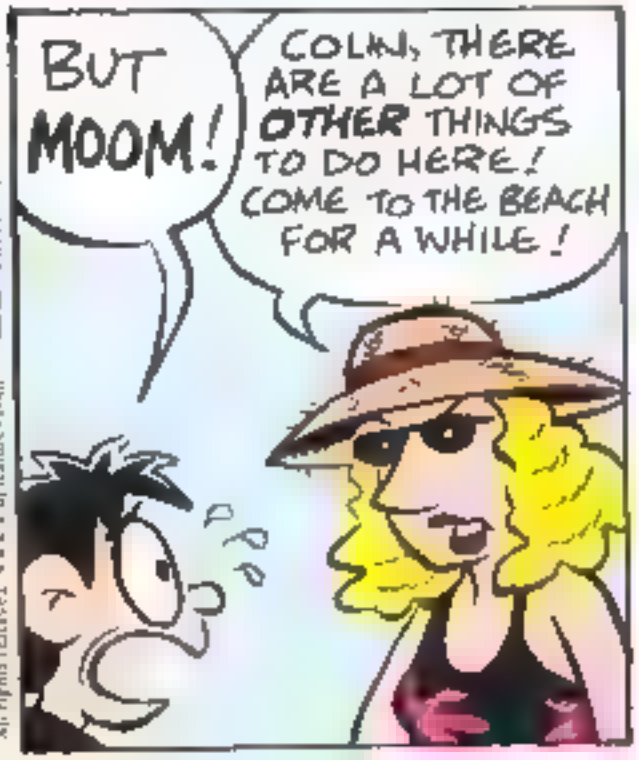
SPLOOSH!
8/27

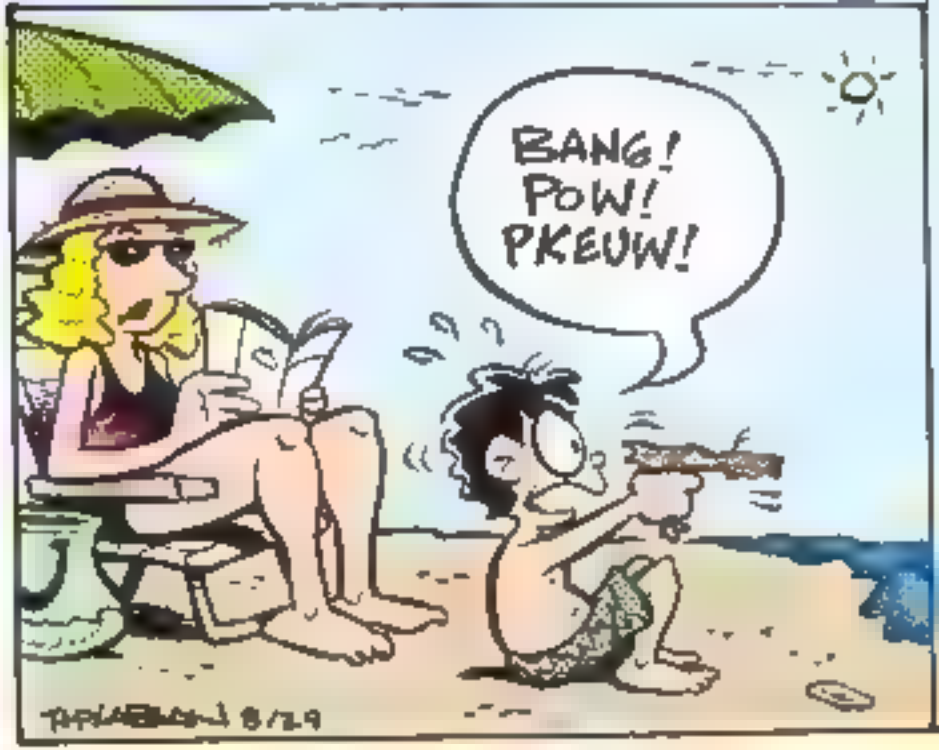

SPLOSH!


WINDSUR
RENTALS
GIVE ME ONE THAT STAYS UP!

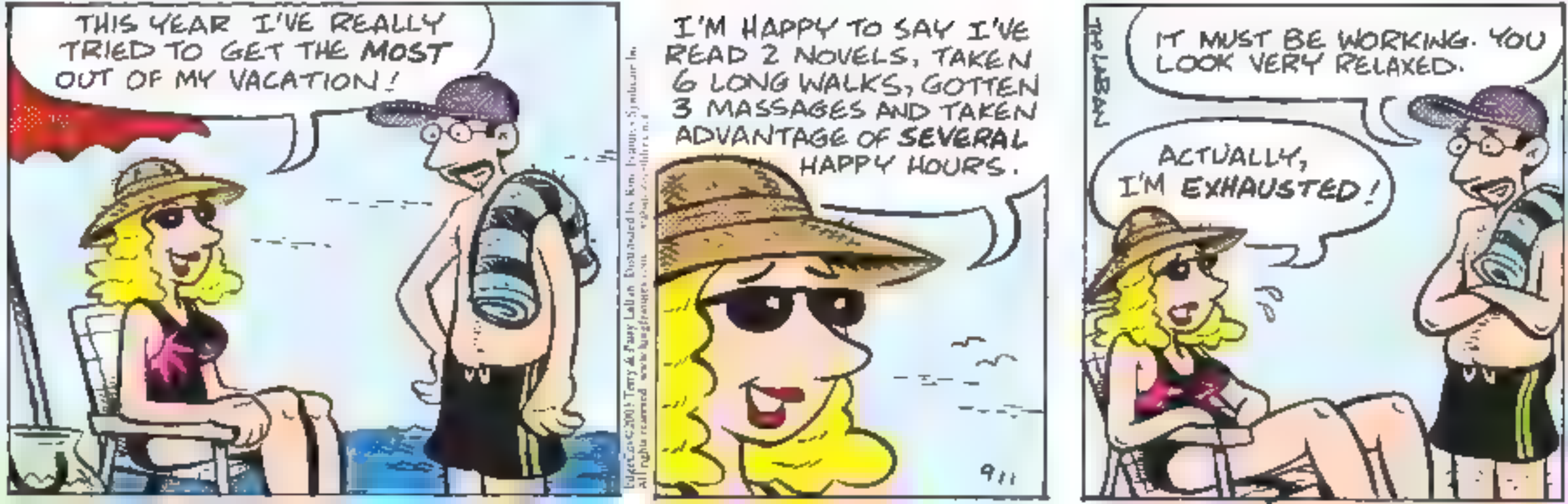

HEY, DADDY! WATCH THIS!
UM HMM.
WATCH THIS, DADDY! DID YOU SEE?
VERY NICE, SWEETIE.
LEN, I JUST FOUND CARLY HALFWAY UP THE BEACH! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WATCHING HER!


I THINK YOU'VE SPENT ENOUGH TIME IN THE ARCADE TODAY!
EATH
LOW
BANG! POW! PKEUW!

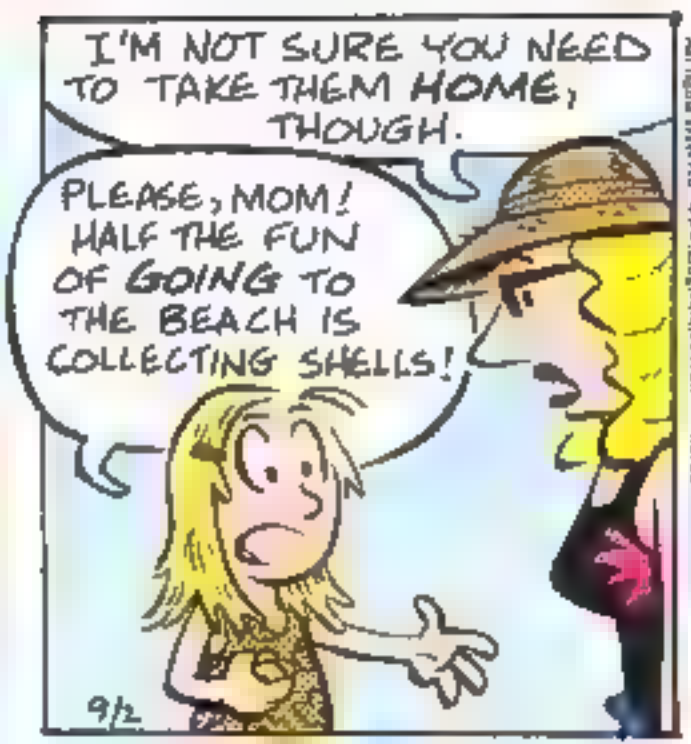

BUT MOOM!
COLIN, THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER THINGS TO DO HERE! COME TO THE BEACH FOR A WHILE!


BANG! POW! PKEUW!

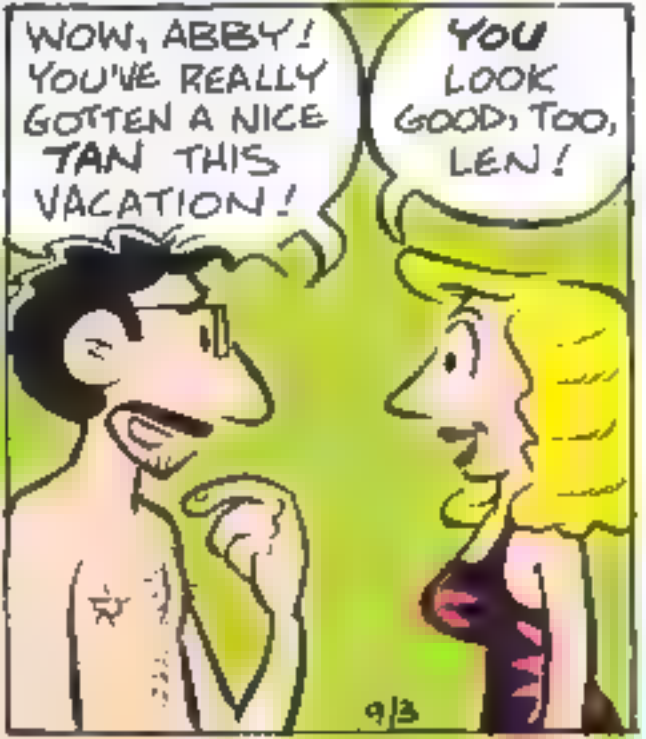
WELL, ABBY-- IT'S THE END OF SUMMER...
I KNOW, LEN.
BUT I'M NOT READY TO START THINKING ABOUT ALL THE THINGS WE NEED TO DO IN THE FALL. I THINK WE SHOULD JUST TRY TO ENJOY THIS MOMENT!
8/30
WERE YOU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING?
JUST THAT NOW IS AN EXCELLENT TIME OF YEAR TO BUY A SNOWBLOWER
TIP LABAN

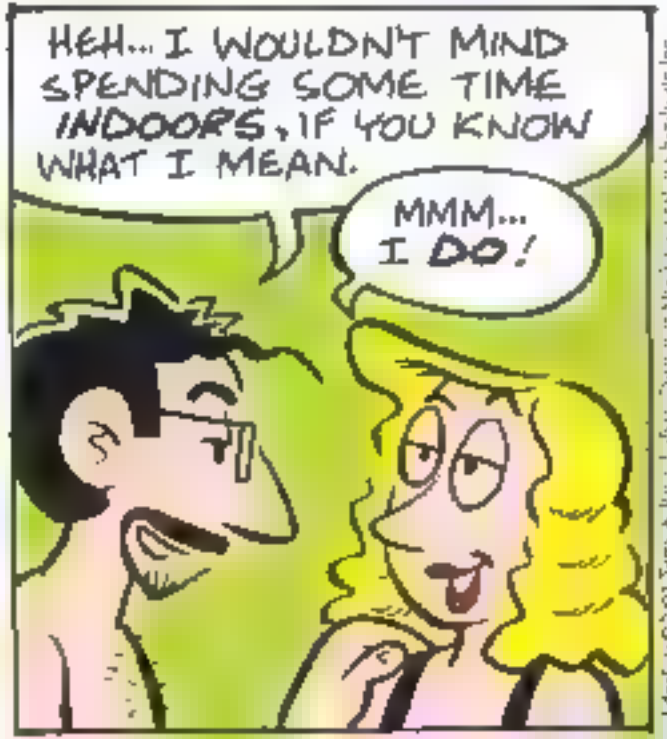

THIS YEAR I'VE REALLY TRIED TO GET THE MOST OUT OF MY VACATION!
I'M HAPPY TO SAY I'VE READ 2 NOVELS, TAKEN 6 LONG WALKS, GOTTEN 3 MASSAGES AND TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF SEVERAL HAPPY HOURS.
9/11
IT MUST BE WORKING. YOU LOOK VERY RELAXED.
ACTUALLY, I'M EXHAUSTED!
THE LABAN

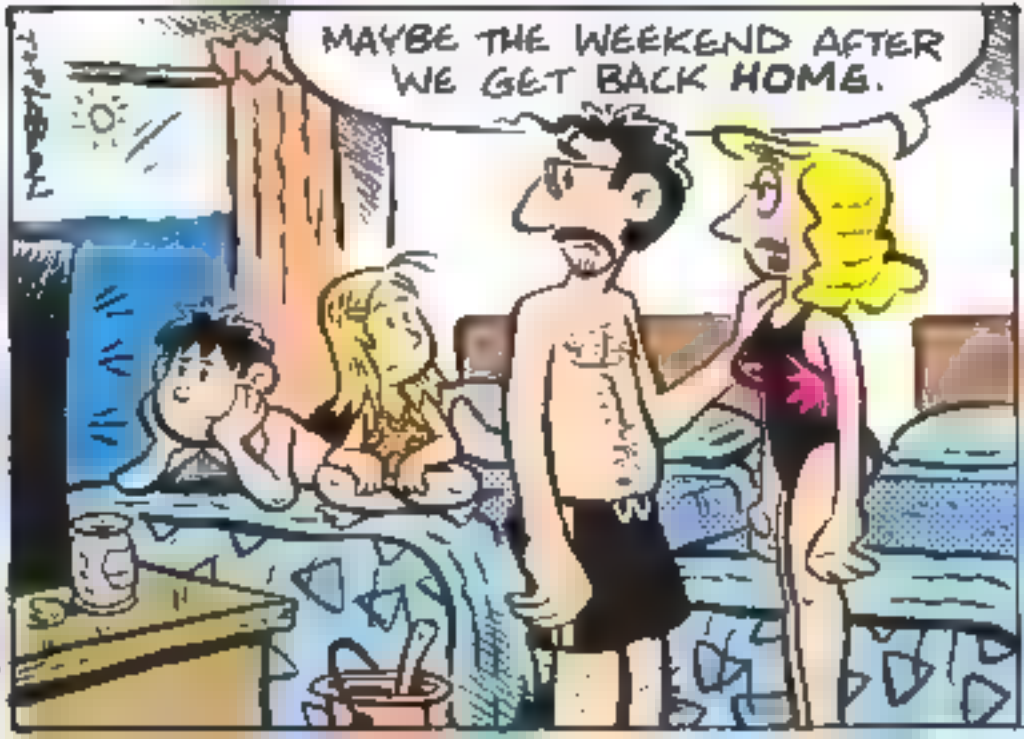
LOOK AT THESE SHELLS, MOM! AREN'T THEY PRETTY?
THEY ARE NICE, CARLY.

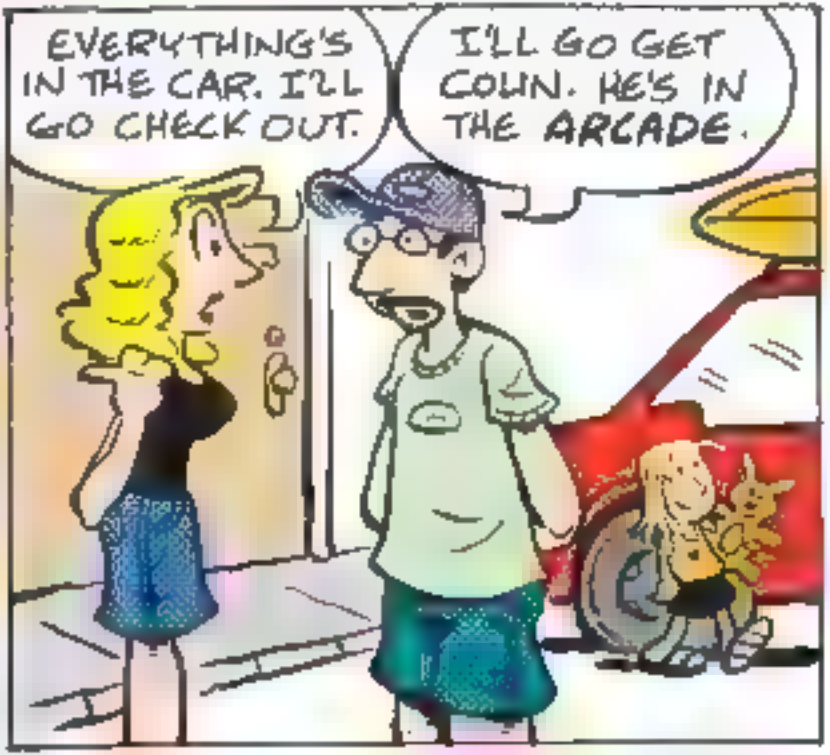

I'M NOT SURE YOU NEED TO TAKE THEM HOME, THOUGH.
PLEASE, MOM! HALF THE FUN OF GOING TO THE BEACH IS COLLECTING SHELLS!
9/2

SIGH!
SHELL SHOPPE
T+PLORAN

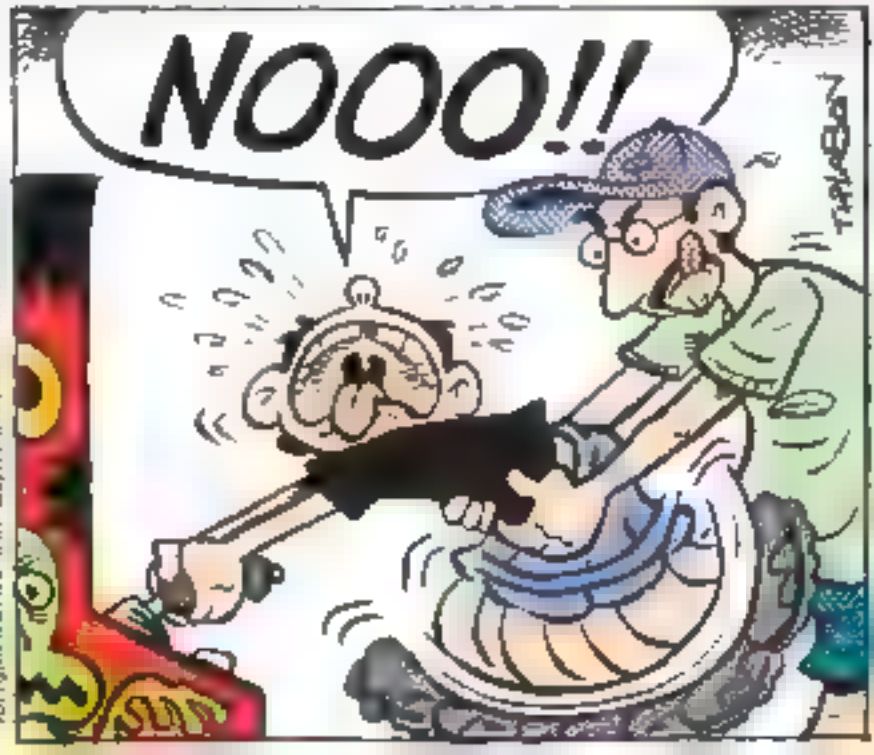

WOW, ABBY! YOU'VE REALLY GOTTEN A NICE TAN THIS VACATION!
YOU LOOK GOOD, TOO, LEN!
9/3


HEH... I WOULDN'T MIND SPENDING SOME TIME INDOORS, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
MMM... I DO!

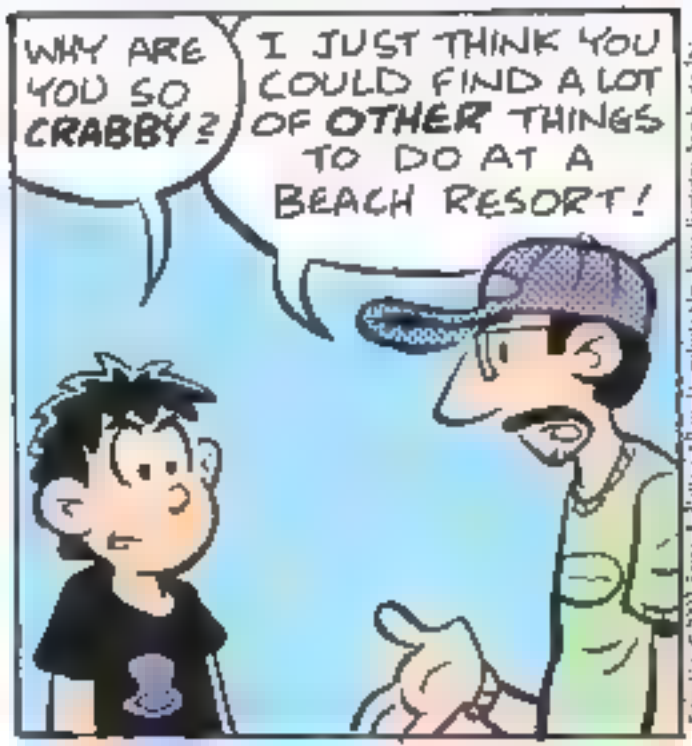

MAYBE THE WEEKEND AFTER WE GET BACK HOME.

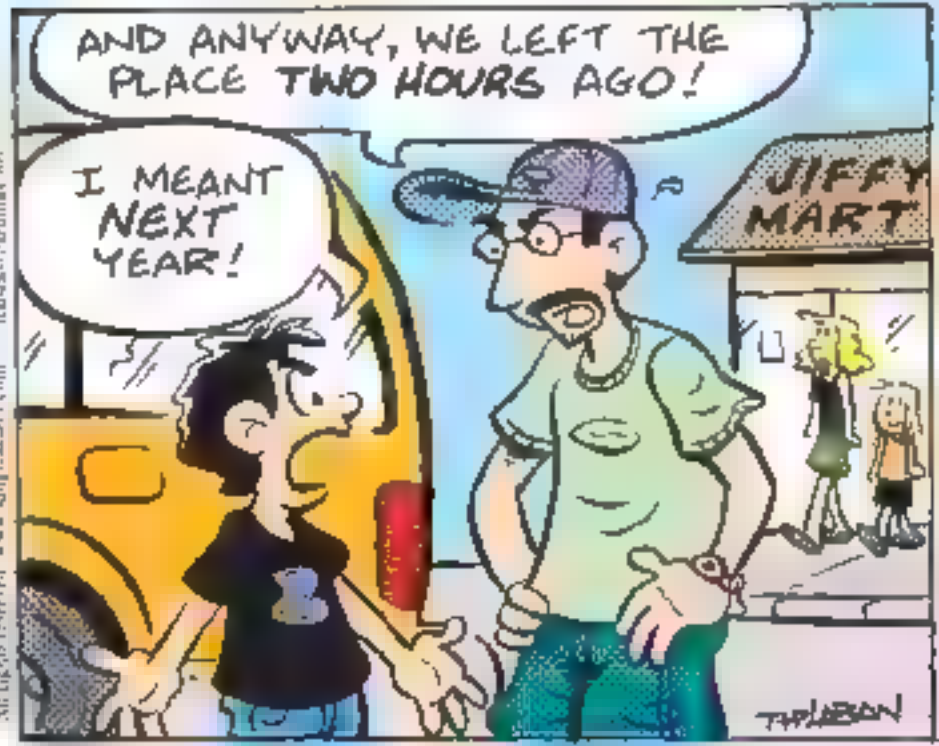

EVERYTHING'S IN THE CAR. I'LL GO CHECK OUT.
I'LL GO GET COLIN. HE'S IN THE ARCADE.

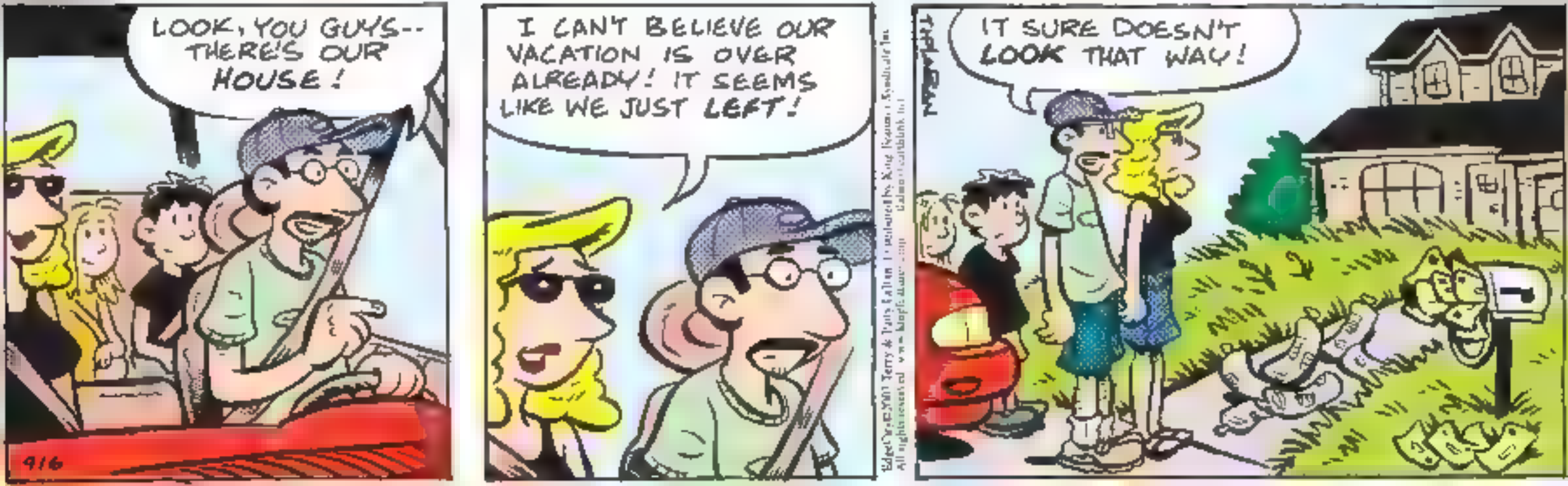
HE CAN PLAY A LITTLE MORE. WE DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE FOR ANOTHER 45 MINUTES.
WELL, IT CAN TAKE A WHILE TO GET HIM OUT OF THERE.
9/4

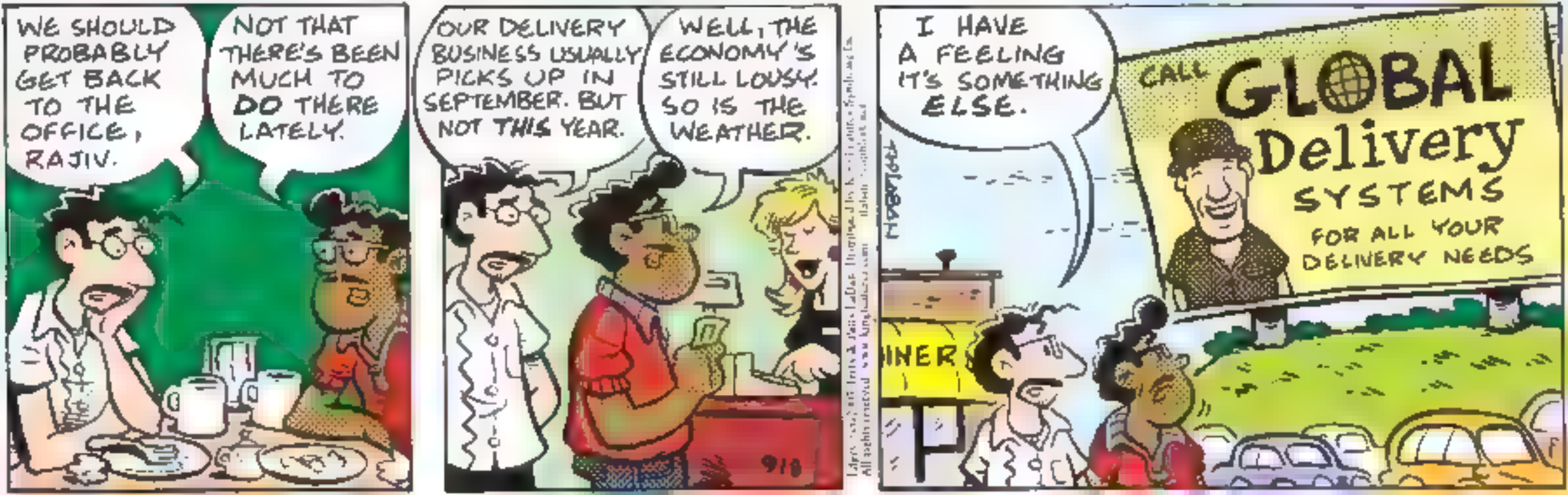

NOOO!!

HEY, DAD-- CAN I GO TO THE ARCADE?
LISTEN, COLIN-- I'M GETTING AWFULLY SICK OF YOU BADGERING ME ABOUT THAT!
9/16

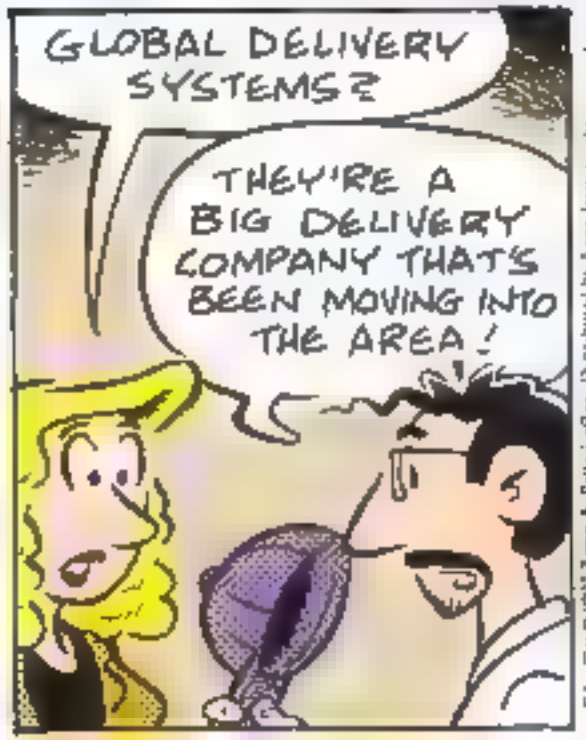

WHY ARE YOU SO CRABBY?
I JUST THINK YOU COULD FIND A LOT OF OTHER THINGS TO DO AT A BEACH RESORT!


AND ANYWAY, WE LEFT THE PLACE TWO HOURS AGO!
I MEANT NEXT YEAR!
JIFFY MART
THABEAN


LOOK, YOU GUYS-- THERE'S OUR HOUSE!
916
I CAN'T BELIEVE OUR VACATION IS OVER ALREADY! IT SEEMS LIKE WE JUST LEFT!
IT SURE DOESN'T LOOK THAT WAY!


WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET BACK TO THE OFFICE, RAJIV.
NOT THAT THERE'S BEEN MUCH TO DO THERE LATELY.
OUR DELIVERY BUSINESS USUALLY PICKS UP IN SEPTEMBER. BUT NOT THIS YEAR.
WELL, THE ECONOMY'S STILL LOUSY. SO IS THE WEATHER.
I HAVE A FEELING IT'S SOMETHING ELSE.
CALL GLOBAL Delivery SYSTEMS FOR ALL YOUR DELIVERY NEEDS
HABERFELD

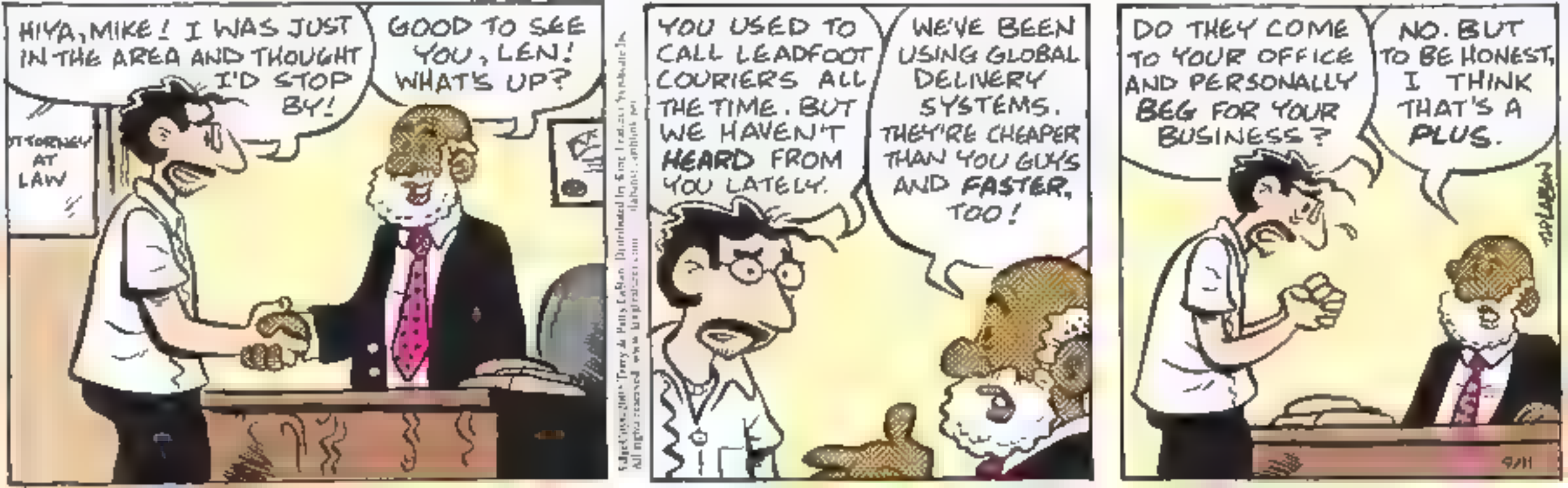
YOU'RE HOME EARLY, LEN.
BUSINESS IS SLOW, ABBY! WE'RE GETTING HAMMERED BY GLOBAL DELIVERY SYS-TEMS!
9/9

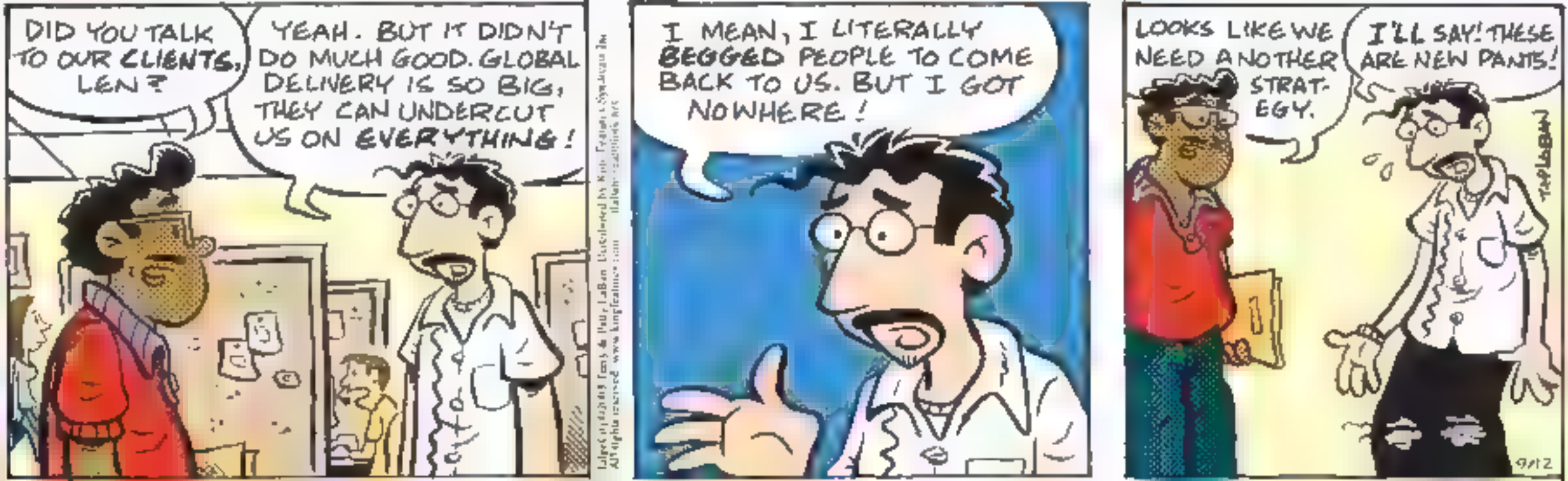

GLOBAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS?
THEY'RE A BIG DELIVERY COMPANY THAT'S BEEN MOVING INTO THE AREA!

THEY'VE BEEN RUNNING TONS OF ADS ON RADIO AND TV, AND GIVING AWAY ALL SORTS OF FANCY PROMOTIONAL ITEMS!
HMM... IT DOES SOUND FAMILIAR...

GLOBAL Delivery SYSTEMS
TAPLABON

RAJIV, I'M THINKING ABOUT VISITING SOME OF OUR REGULAR CLIENTS TO ASK WHY THEY'VE STOPPED CALLING US.
WE KNOW WHY, LEN.
IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE BEING UNDERCUT BY GLOBAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS!
THAT'S WHY WE SHOULD POINT OUT TO THEM THAT WE OFFER A LEVEL OF PERSONAL SERVICE THAT A BIG COMPANY CAN'T!
EXACTLY WHAT "PERSONAL SERVICE" DO YOU MEAN?
IF THEY USE US, I'LL CUT THEIR LAWNS.

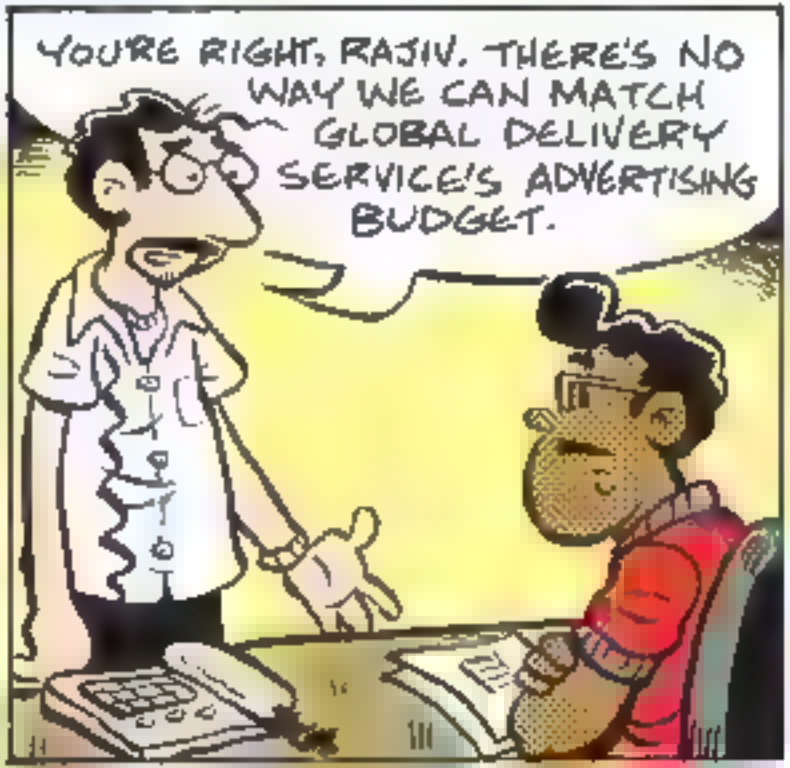

HIYA, MIKE! I WAS JUST IN THE AREA AND THOUGHT I'D STOP BY!
GOOD TO SEE YOU, LEN! WHAT'S UP?
ATTORNEY AT LAW
YOU USED TO CALL LEADFOOT COURIERS ALL THE TIME. BUT WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU LATELY.
WE'VE BEEN USING GLOBAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS. THEY'RE CHEAPER THAN YOU GUYS AND FASTER, TOO!
DO THEY COME TO YOUR OFFICE AND PERSONALLY BEG FOR YOUR BUSINESS?
NO. BUT TO BE HONEST, I THINK THAT'S A PLUS.
9/11


DID YOU TALK TO OUR CLIENTS, LEN?
YEAH. BUT IT DIDN'T DO MUCH GOOD. GLOBAL DELIVERY IS SO BIG, THEY CAN UNDERCUT US ON EVERYTHING!
I MEAN, I LITERALLY BEGGED PEOPLE TO COME BACK TO US. BUT I GOT NOWHERE!
LOOKS LIKE WE NEED ANOTHER STRATEGY.
I'LL SAY! THESE ARE NEW PANTS!
9/12

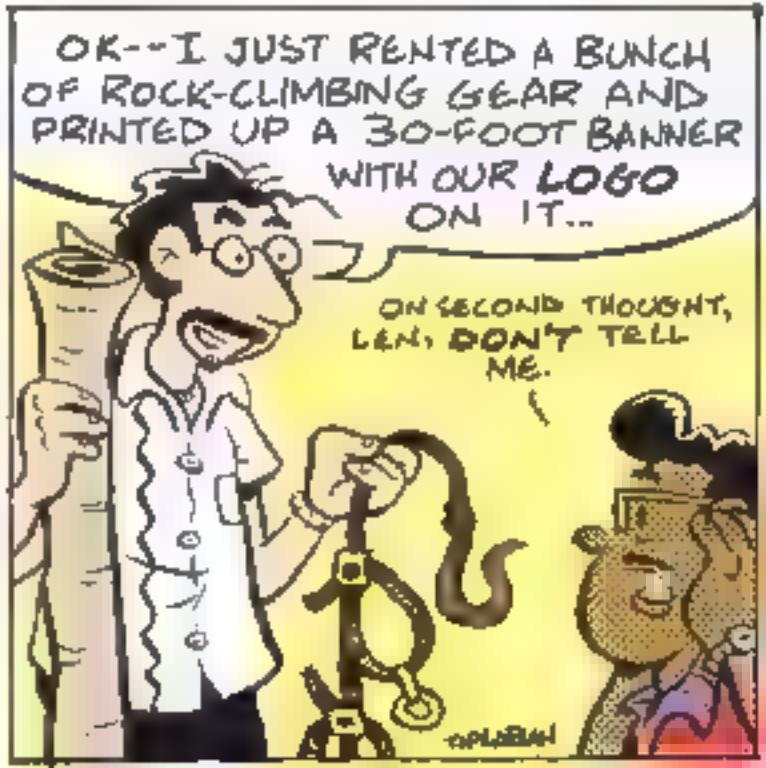
IF WE DON'T FIND A WAY TO COMPETE WITH GLOBAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS, THEY'LL PUT US OUT OF BUSINESS, LEN!
IT'S TIME TO PLAY HARD-BALL, RAJIV!

WE'VE GOT TO CUT OUR RATES TO MATCH THEIRS... OFFER THE SAME INCENTIVES THEY DO... AND LAUNCH AN AD CAMPAIGN TO RAISE OUR LOCAL PROFILE!
9/13

IF WE DO ALL THAT, WE'LL GO BANKRUPT ANYWAY!
HEY, I'M JUST BRAIN-STORMING.

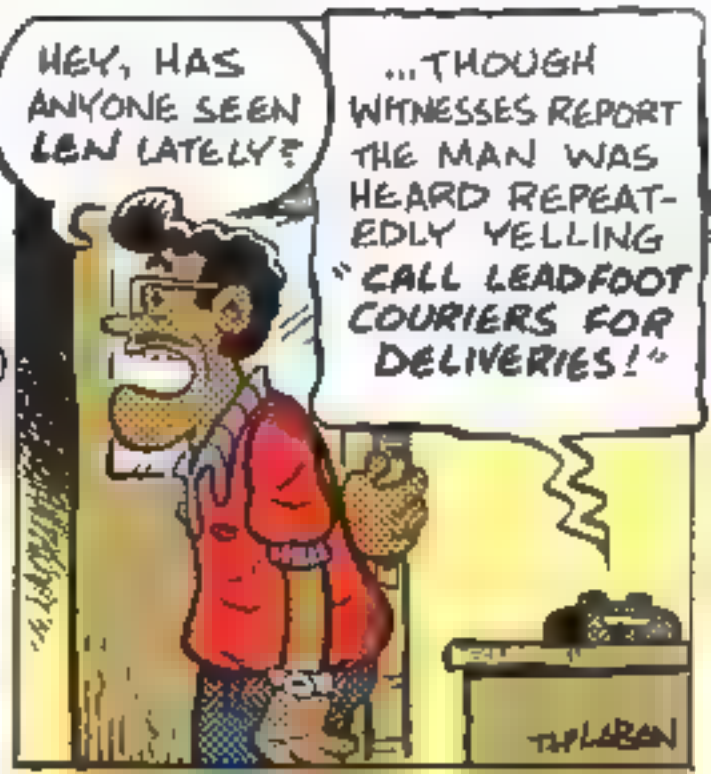

YOU'RE RIGHT, RAJIV. THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN MATCH GLOBAL DELIVERY SERVICE'S ADVERTISING BUDGET.

WE NEED TO BE CREATIVE AND FIND A WAY TO GET LOTS OF PUBLICITY FOR LITTLE COST. SOME KIND OF "GUERRILLA MARKETING," IF YOU WILL.
AND WHAT EXACTLY WOULD THIS "GUERRILLA MARKETING" CONSIST OF?
9.15


OK--I JUST RENTED A BUNCH OF ROCK-CLIMBING GEAR AND PRINTED UP A 30-FOOT BANNER WITH OUR LOGO ON IT...
ON SECOND THOUGHT, LEN, DON'T TELL ME.

AND NOW THE NEWS... AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN WAS ARRESTED THIS MORNING USING ROPES TO CLIMB THE WELLINGTON BRIDGE.
3:30

POLICE SAY HE WAS APPARENTLY INTENDING TO UNFURL A BANNER. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON WHAT IT SAID...
9/16


HEY, HAS ANYONE SEEN LEN LATELY?
...THOUGH WITNESSES REPORT THE MAN WAS HEARD REPEATEDLY YELLING "CALL LEADFOOT COURIERS FOR DELIVERIES!"
TAYLOR

Y'KNOW, LEN, TRYING TO CLIMB THE WELLINGTON BRIDGE AND UNFURL A BANNER WITH OUR LOGO ON IT WAS PRETTY STUPID.
HEY, RAJIV-- DESPERATE TIMES DEMAND DESPERATE MEASURES!
NEWS
LOCAL MAN ARRESTED

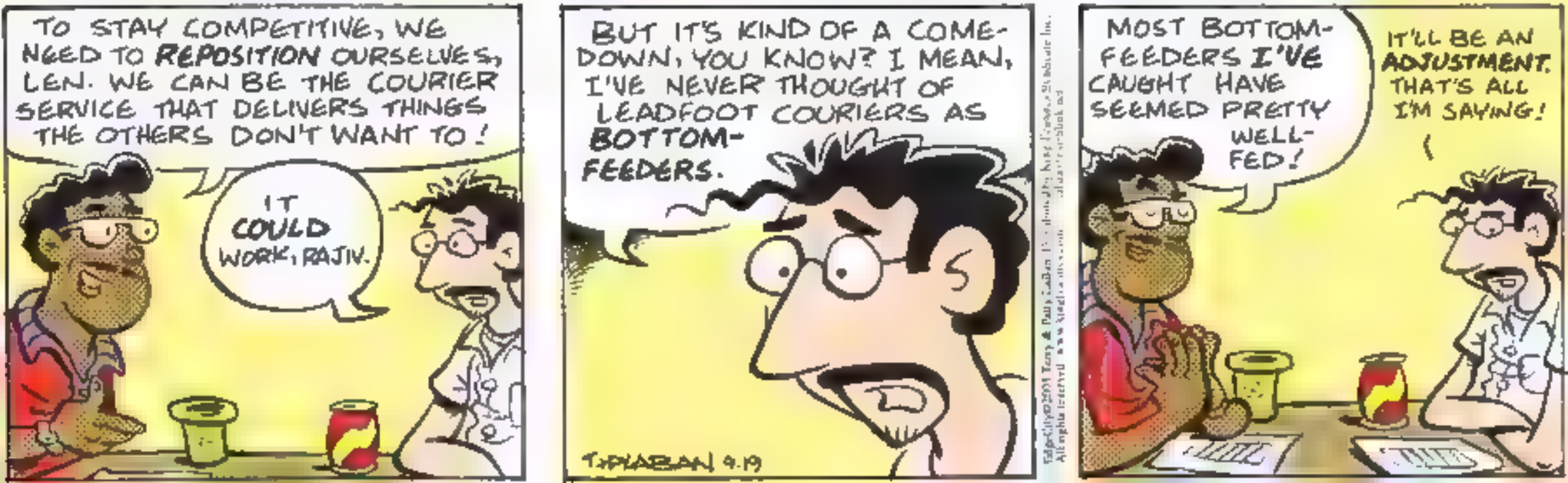
ANYHOW, IT WORKED! WE WERE ALL OVER THE PAPERS AND TV! WE EVEN GOT SOME NEW BUSINESS, RIGHT?
YEAH. MAYBE 5 OR 6 GRAND WORTH.
9.17

WELL, THAT'S NOT SO BAD!
NOPE. JUST 30 THOUSAND MORE AND WE'LL COVER YOUR BAIL!

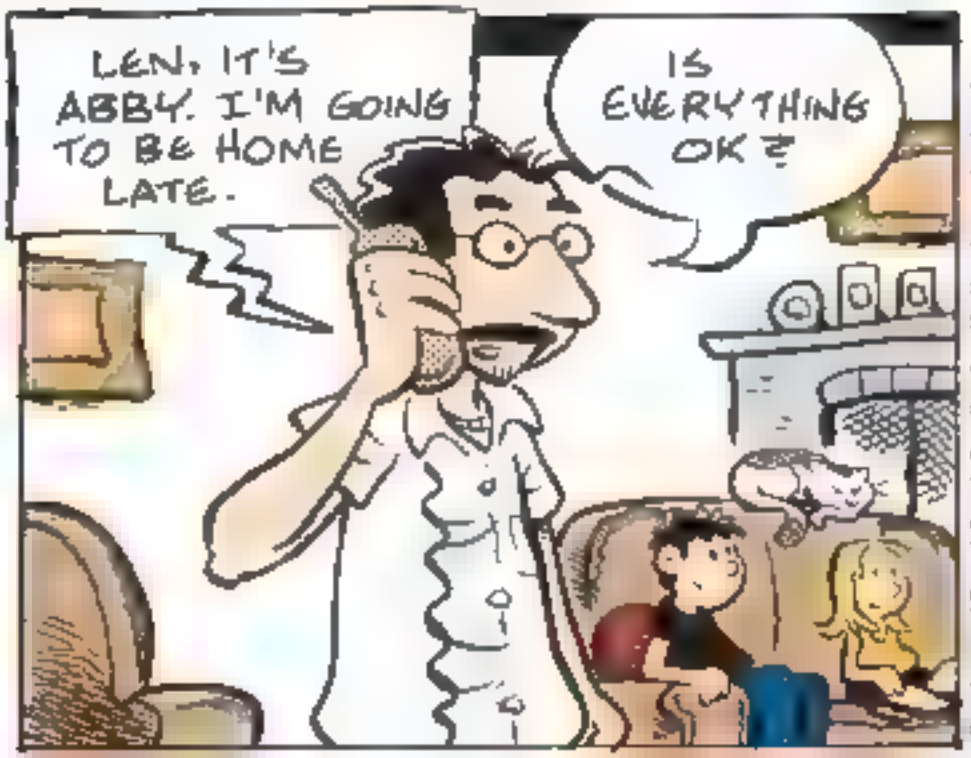
FACE IT, LEN-- WHEN IT COMES TO DELIVERING LEGAL PAPERS AND FRAGILE PACKAGES, GLOBAL DELIVERY SERVICES HAS US BEAT!

WHAT WE NEED IS TO FIND A NICHE THEY'RE NOT EXPLOITING. THINGS WE CAN DELIVER THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

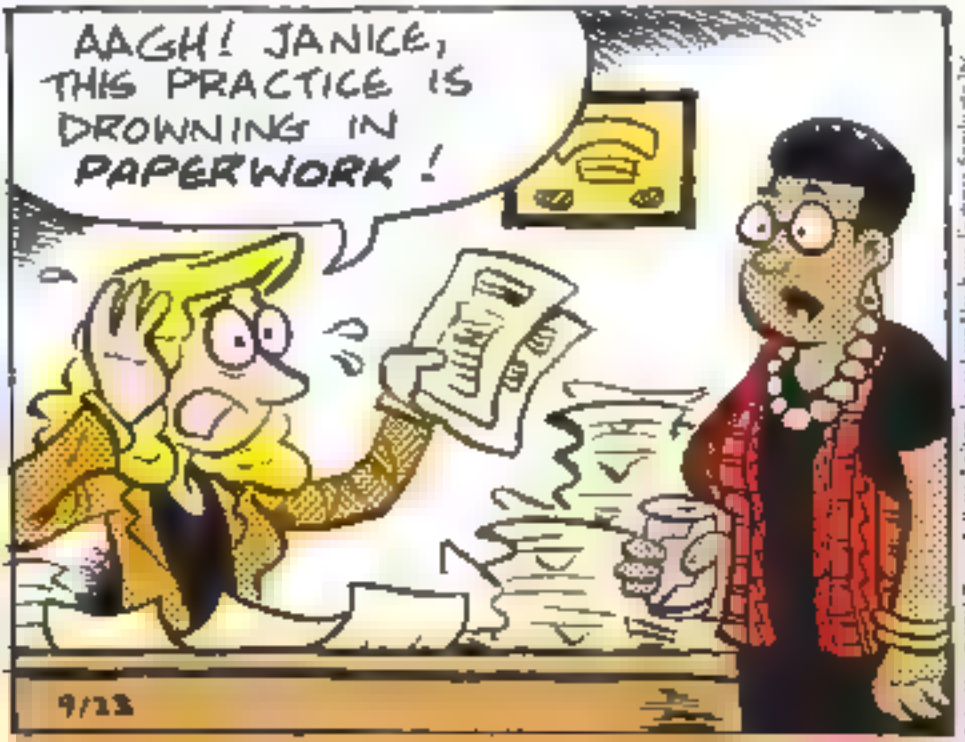
FOR INSTANCE, EVERY DAY THERE MUST BE DOZENS OF BAGS LEFT UNATTENDED IN PUBLIC PLACES THAT NEED TO BE DELIVERED TO THE POLICE!
YOU'RE JUST ILLUSTRATING A PRINCIPLE, RIGHT?
THE PLAGUE
9.18

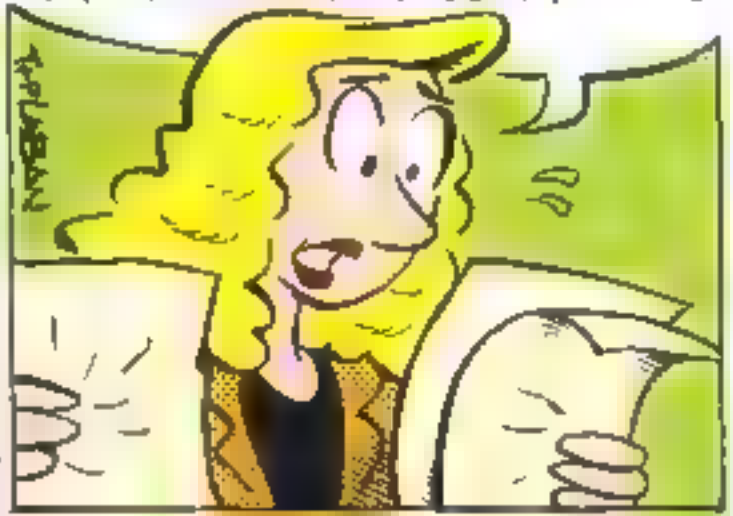

TO STAY COMPETITIVE, WE NEED TO REPOSITION OURSELVES, LEN. WE CAN BE THE COURIER SERVICE THAT DELIVERS THINGS THE OTHERS DON'T WANT TO!
IT COULD WORK, RAJIV.
BUT IT'S KIND OF A COME-DOWN, YOU KNOW? I MEAN, I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF LEADFOOT COURIERS AS BOTTOM-FEEDERS.
T.HABAN 9.19
MOST BOTTOM-FEEDERS I'VE CAUGHT HAVE SEEMED PRETTY WELL-FED!
IT'LL BE AN ADJUSTMENT. THAT'S ALL I'M SAYING!

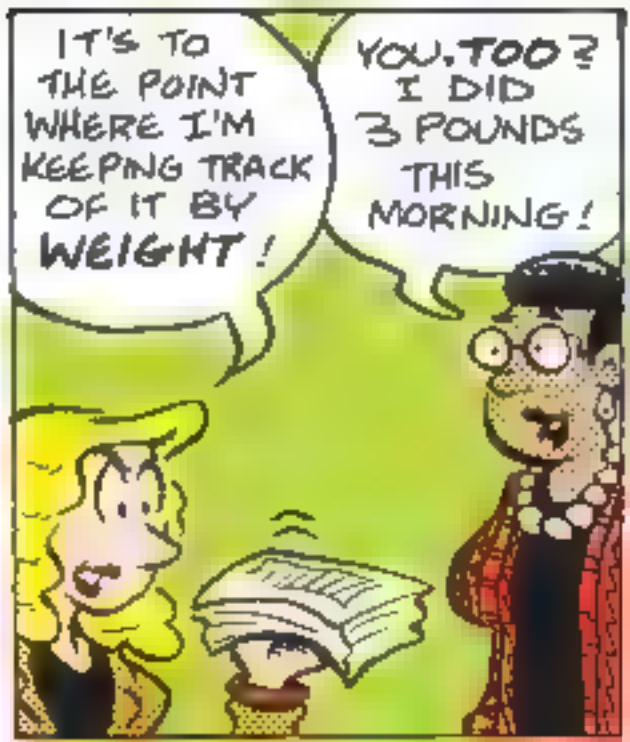
HOW ARE THINGS AT WORK, LEN?
NOT BAD. WE'VE BEEN GETTING A LOT OF NEW CLIENTS.
9-20
THAT'S GOOD NEWS!
YEAH. IT SEEMS RAJIV'S IDEA TO HAVE US TARGET A NICHE MARKET IS PAYING OFF.
I'M STILL NOT CRAZY ABOUT US BEING THE COMPANY THAT DELIVERS STUFF NO ONE ELSE WANTS TO!
WHO CARES? YOU'RE MAKING MONEY! SO, WHO ARE THE NEW CLIENTS?
TODAY WE HEARD FROM A SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT, A SAUSAGE FACTORY, AND A FUNERAL PARLOR.
UH... YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE A SHOWER...


LEN, IT'S ABBY. I'M GOING TO BE HOME LATE.
IS EVERYTHING OK?

YEAH. I JUST HAVE TO FINISH UP SOME PAPERWORK.
9/22


AAGH! JANICE, THIS PRACTICE IS DROWNING IN PAPERWORK!
9/23

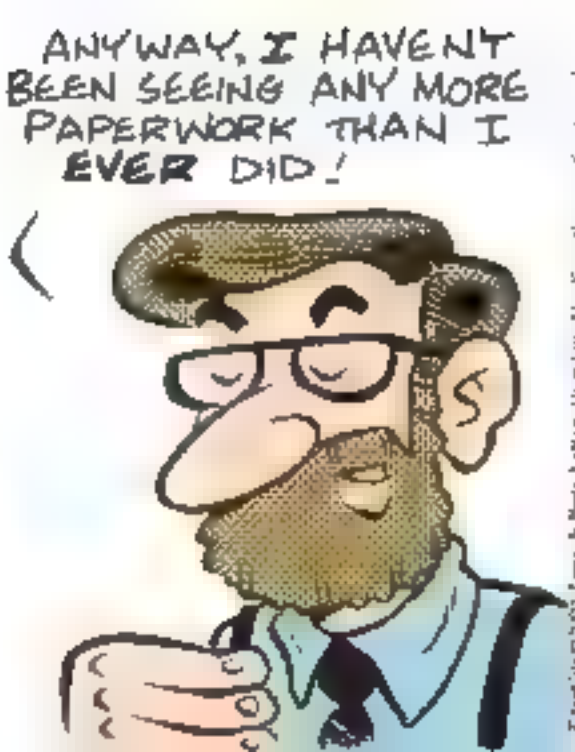

I BECAME A THERAPIST BECAUSE I WANTED TO HELP PEOPLE, NOT SO I COULD FILL OUT STACKS OF FORMS FOR MANAGED-CARE COMPANIES!


IT'S TO THE POINT WHERE I'M KEEPING TRACK OF IT BY WEIGHT!
YOU, TOO? I DID 3 POUNDS THIS MORNING!

THIS PRACTICE SPENDS AS MUCH TIME DOING PAPERWORK AS WE DO SEEING THERAPY CLIENTS. I THINK WE SHOULD HIRE MORE OFFICE STAFF.
9/24

I THINK THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, ABBY.
IT'S DEFINITELY WORTH LOOKING INTO.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, STEWART?

OVER MY DEAD BODY!
NOT THAT I NEEDED TO ASK.



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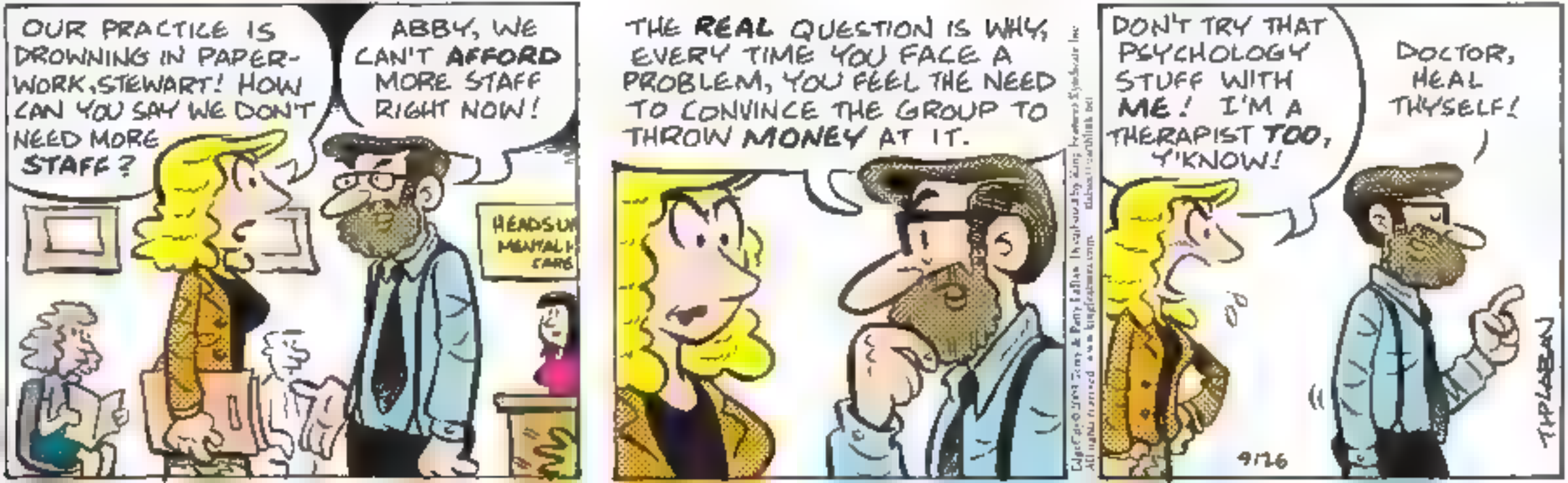
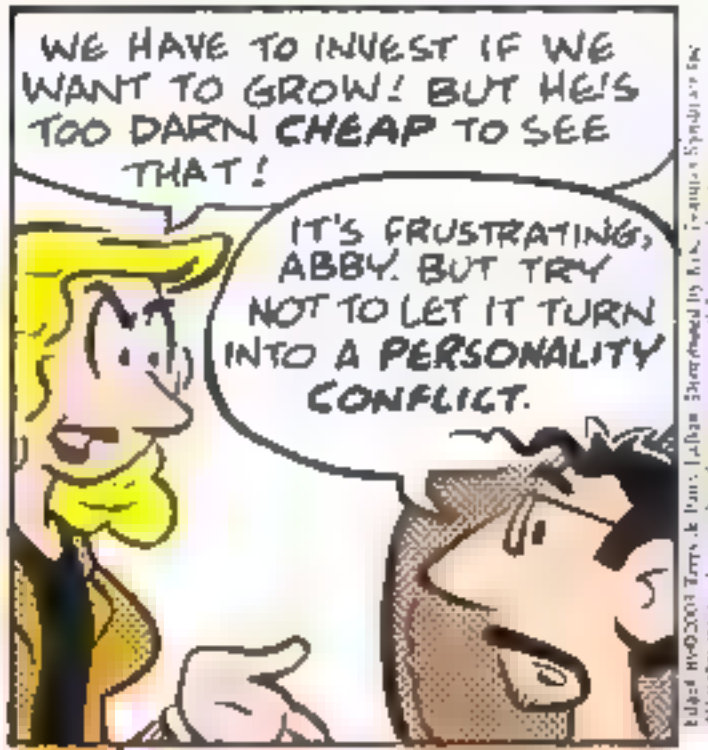
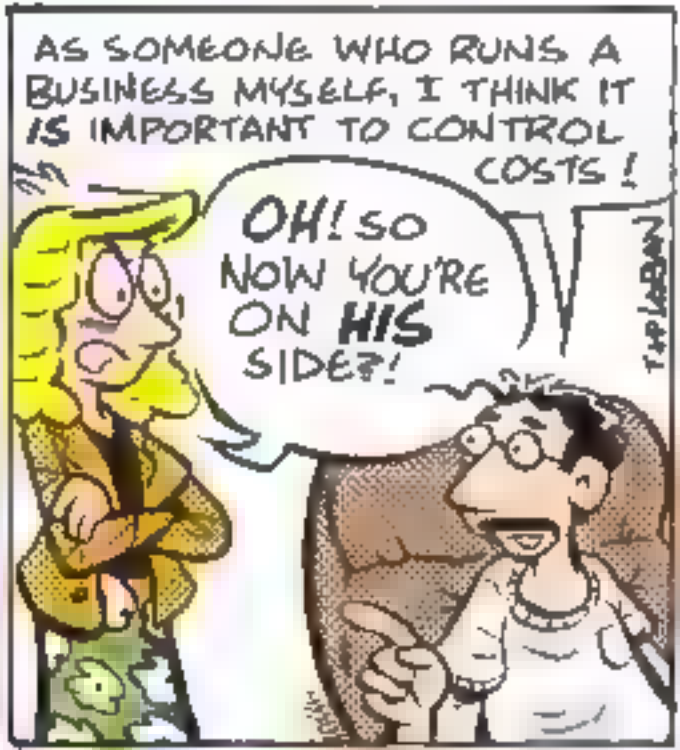
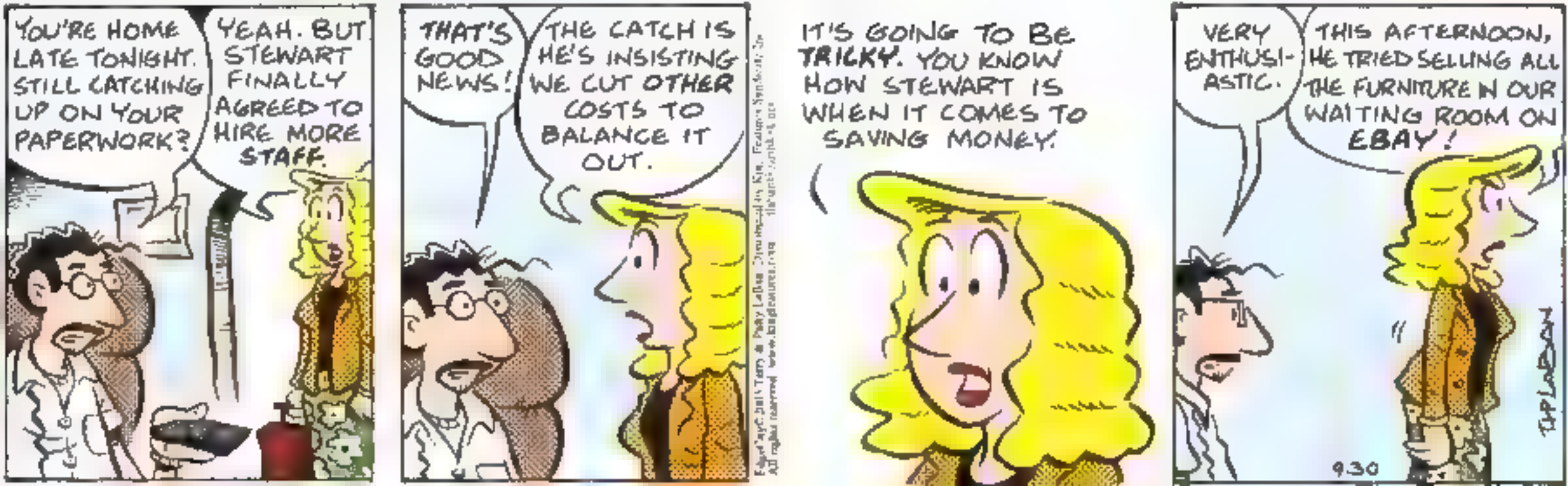

OUR PRACTICE IS DROWNING IN PAPER-WORK, STEWART! HOW CAN YOU SAY WE DON'T NEED MORE STAFF?
ABBY, WE CAN'T AFFORD MORE STAFF RIGHT NOW!
HEADS UP MENTAL H CARE
THE REAL QUESTION IS WHY, EVERY TIME YOU FACE A PROBLEM, YOU FEEL THE NEED TO CONVINCE THE GROUP TO THROW MONEY AT IT.
DON'T TRY THAT PSYCHOLOGY STUFF WITH ME! I'M A THERAPIST TOO, Y'KNOW!
DOCTOR, HEAL THYSELF!
9/26
THPLABAN

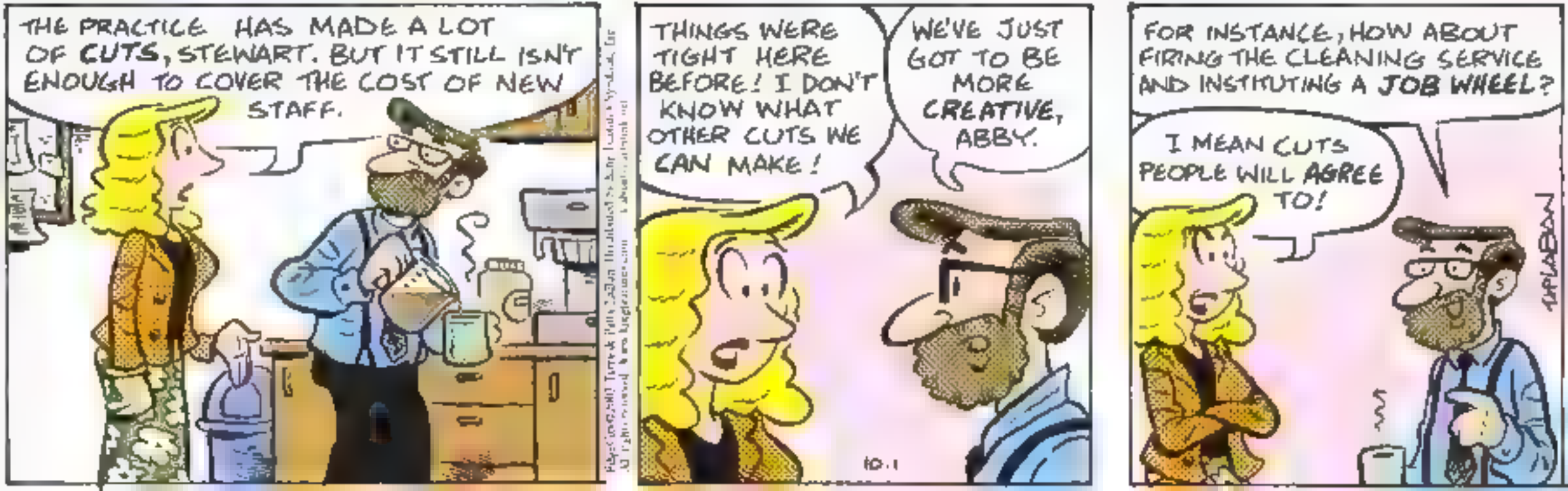
OUR THERAPY PRACTICE IS BURIED IN PAPERWORK. BUT STEWART WON'T AGREE TO HIRE MORE STAFF!
9/27

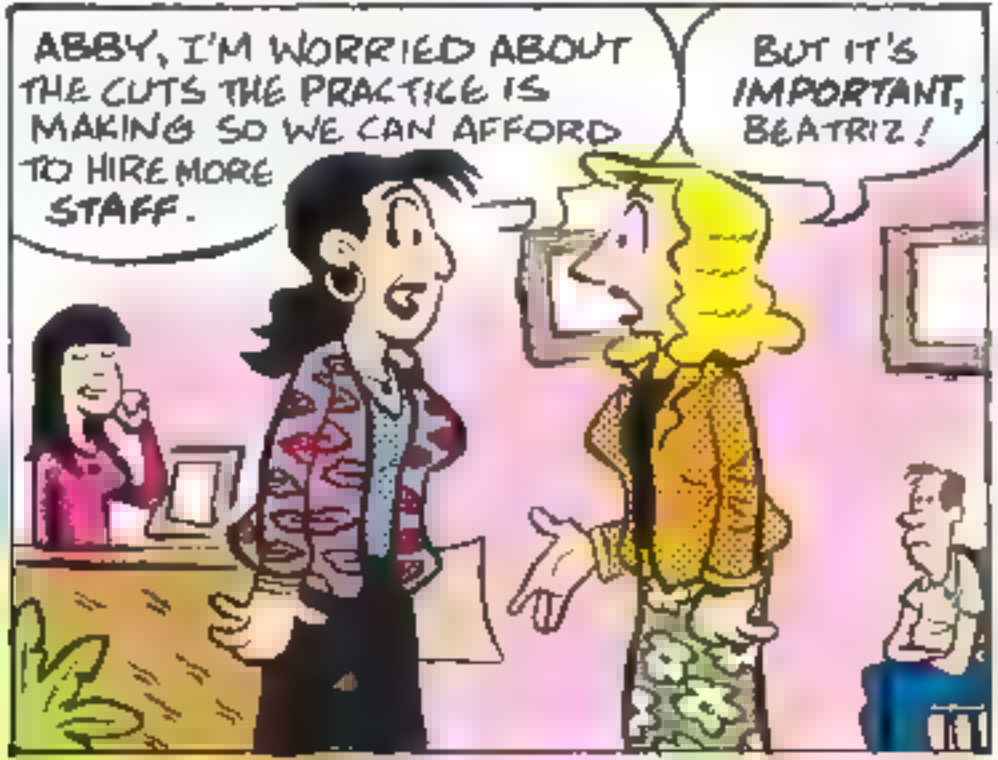

WE HAVE TO INVEST IF WE WANT TO GROW! BUT HE'S TOO DARN CHEAP TO SEE THAT!
IT'S FRUSTRATING, ABBY. BUT TRY NOT TO LET IT TURN INTO A PERSONALITY CONFLICT.


AS SOMEONE WHO RUNS A BUSINESS MYSELF, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTROL COSTS!
OH! SO NOW YOU'RE ON HIS SIDE?!
TIP LABAN

HOW CAN I CONVINCE YOU THAT WE NEED TO HIRE MORE STAFF, STEWART?
IT'S NOT THE STAFF I OBJECT TO, ABBY. IT'S THE EXPENSE!
IF YOU WANT MORE STAFF, YOU EITHER HAVE TO CUT COSTS OR FIND NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE!
WHAT NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE?
WELL, IF WE ONLY BOUGHT OFFICE SUPPLIES WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, WE COULD RENT OUT THE STORAGE CLOset.
9/29

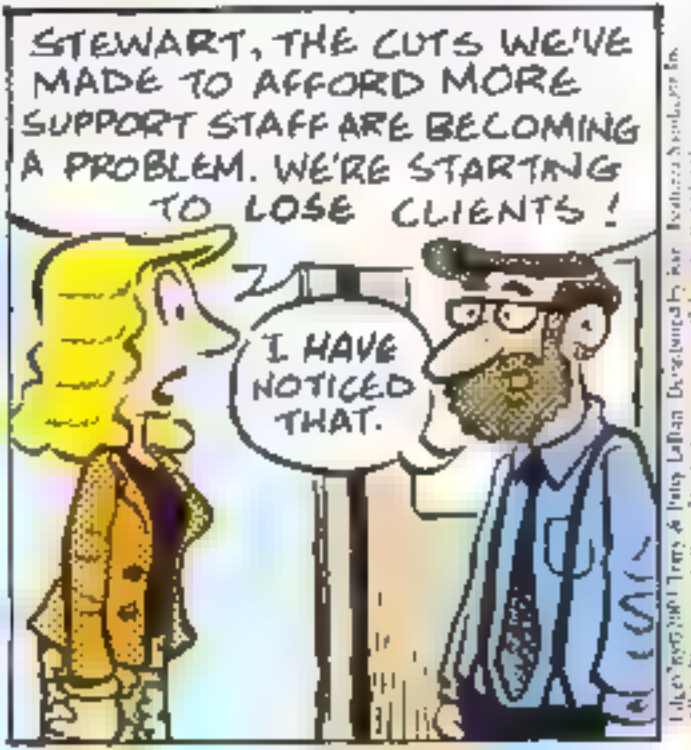

YOU'RE HOME LATE TONIGHT. STILL CATCHING UP ON YOUR PAPERWORK?
YEAH. BUT STEWART FINALLY AGREED TO HIRE MORE STAFF.
THAT'S GOOD NEWS!
THE CATCH IS HE'S INSISTING WE CUT OTHER COSTS TO BALANCE IT OUT.
IT'S GOING TO BE TRICKY. YOU KNOW HOW STEWART IS WHEN IT COMES TO SAVING MONEY.
VERY ENTHUSI-ASTIC.
THIS AFTERNOON, HE TRIED SELLING ALL THE FURNITURE IN OUR WAITING ROOM ON EBAY!
TOPLABAN
9.30


THE PRACTICE HAS MADE A LOT OF CUTS, STEWART. BUT IT STILL ISN'T ENOUGH TO COVER THE COST OF NEW STAFF.
THINGS WERE TIGHT HERE BEFORE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT OTHER CUTS WE CAN MAKE!
WE'VE JUST GOT TO BE MORE CREATIVE, ABBY.
FOR INSTANCE, HOW ABOUT FIRING THE CLEANING SERVICE AND INSTITUTING A JOB WHEEL?
I MEAN CUTS PEOPLE WILL AGREE TO!

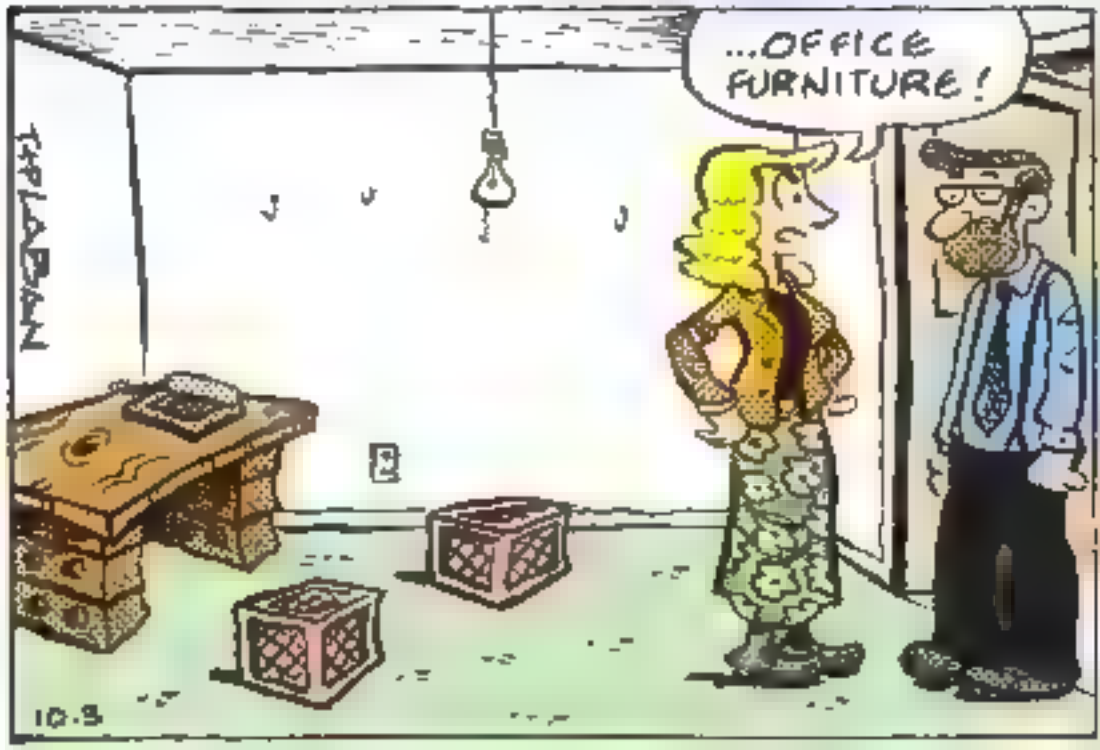

ABBY, I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE CUTS THE PRACTICE IS MAKING SO WE CAN AFFORD TO HIRE MORE STAFF.
BUT IT'S IMPORTANT, BEATRIZ!

WE CAN'T SERVE OUR THERAPY CLIENTS IF WE'RE BURIED IN PAPERWORK!
WELL, I'VE BEEN GETTING A LOT OF NEGATIVE FEEDBACK ABOUT US NOT PROVIDING ALL THE THINGS WE USED TO.
10.2 T+P LABAN

YOU CHARGED ME $5.00 FOR THE TISSUE I USED WHEN I CRIED ABOUT MY DIVORCE?!!
OK--WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THIS.

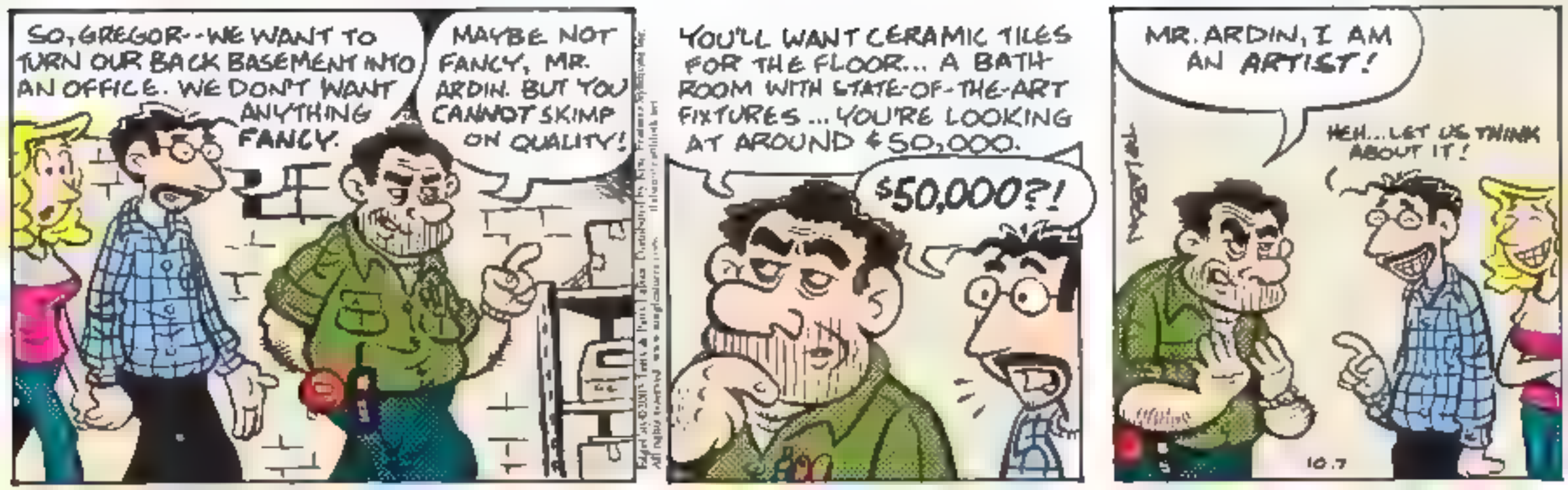

STEWART, THE CUTS WE'VE MADE TO AFFORD MORE SUPPORT STAFF ARE BECOMING A PROBLEM. WE'RE STARTING TO LOSE CLIENTS!
I HAVE NOTICED THAT.

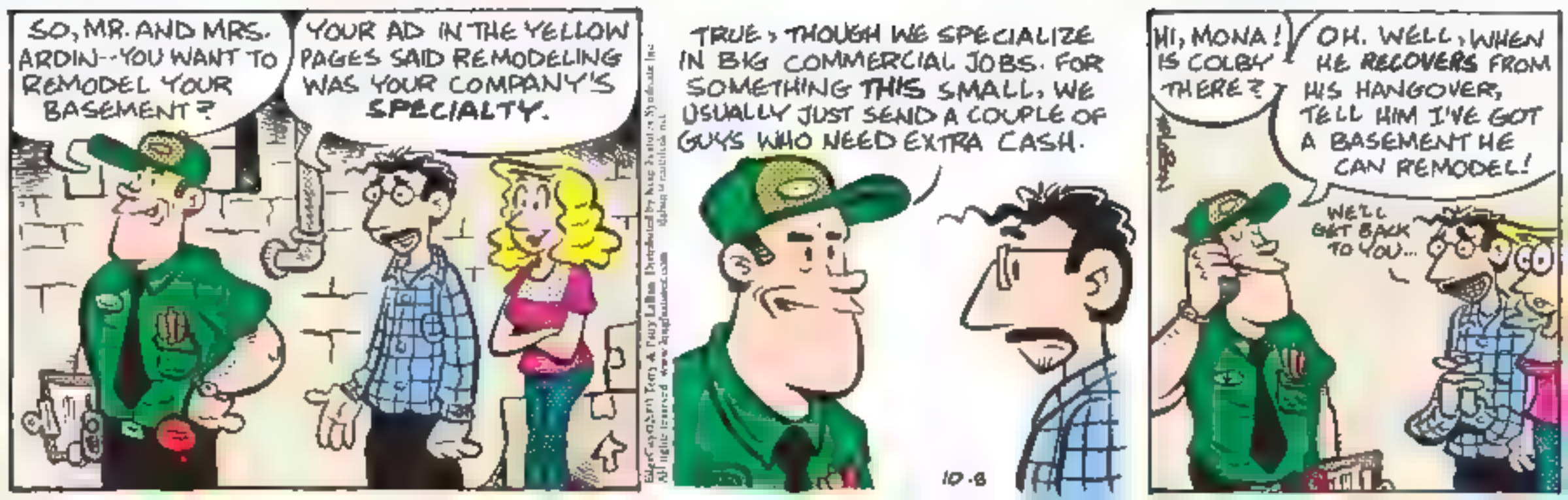
FACE IT--PEOPLE EXPECT CERTAIN AMENITIES WHEN THEY COME HERE FOR THERAPY. MAGAZINES...TISSUES...

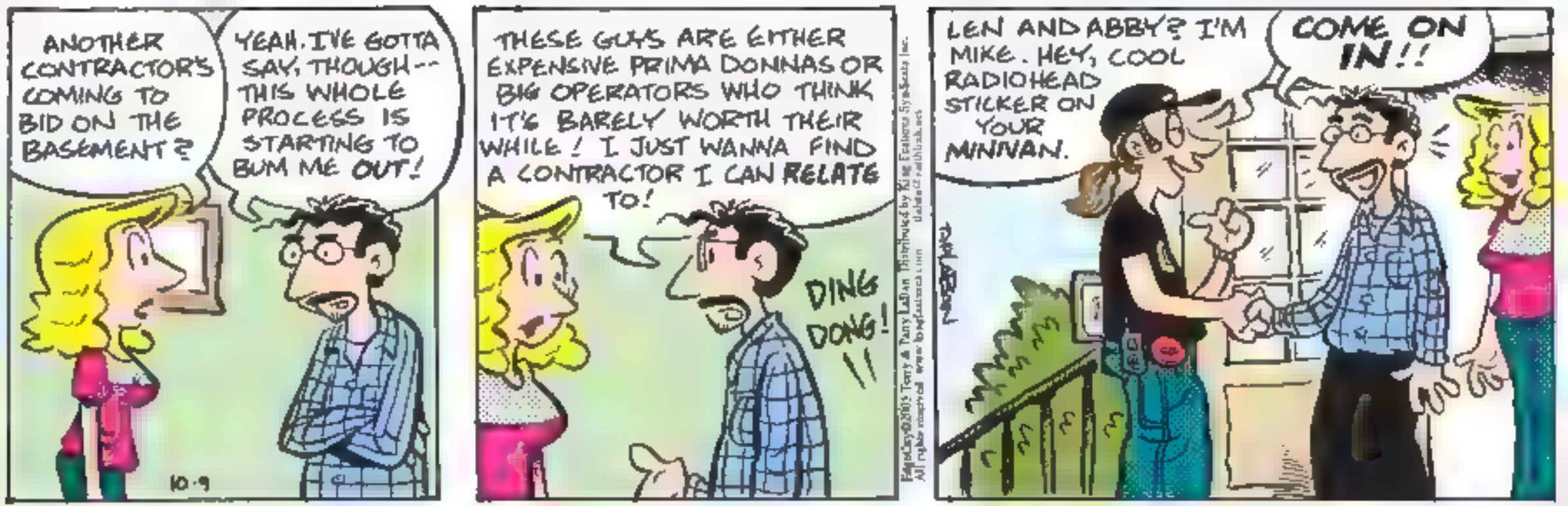

...OFFICE FURNITURE!
10-5

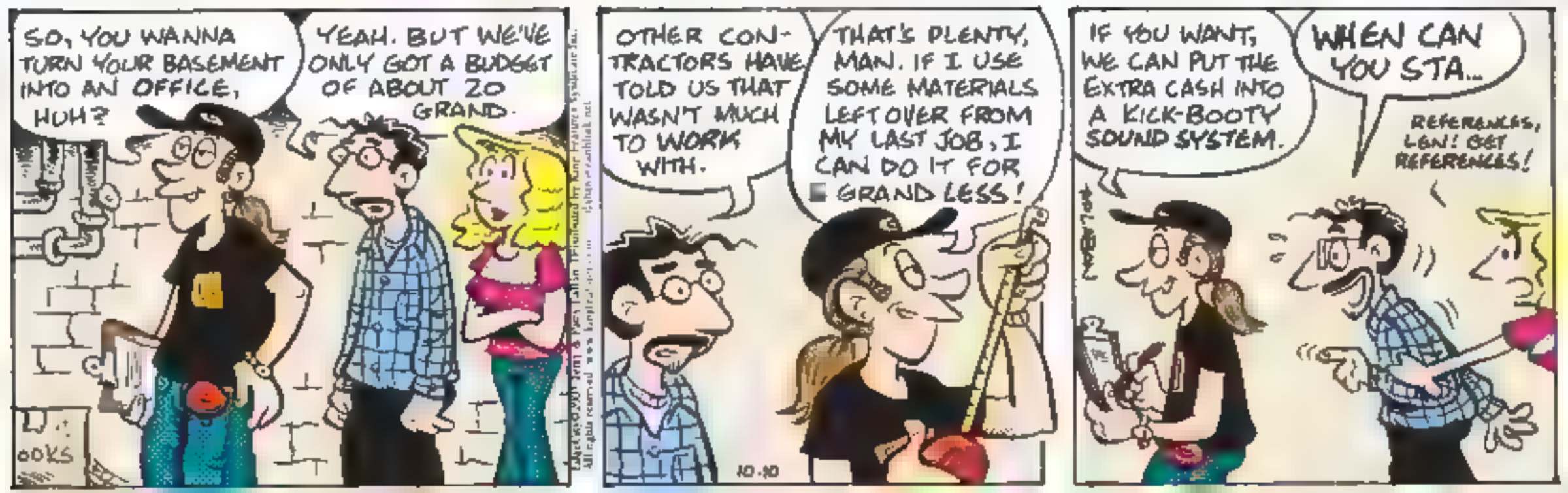
WELL, STEWART--WE'VE TRIED CUTTING EVERYTHING WE CAN, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE STILL CAN'T AFFORD TO HIRE NEW STAFF.
I DISAGREE, ABBY. WE OUGHT TO THINK OF THE NEW STAFF AS AN INVESTMENT.
AFTER ALL, IF WE DON'T SPEND SO MUCH TIME DOING PAPER WORK, WE CAN SEE MORE CLIENTS.
WHAT?! BUT FOR 2 WEEKS, YOU'VE BEEN ARGUING JUST THE OPPOSITE!!
10-4
Y'KNOW, STEWART, THE PROBLEM ISN'T THAT YOU'RE CHEAP-- IT'S THAT YOU'RE CONTRARY!
REMEMBER THAT NEXT TIME AND SAVE US ALL A LOT OF HEADACHES!
I'M PLACING AN AD...
TOPLABAN

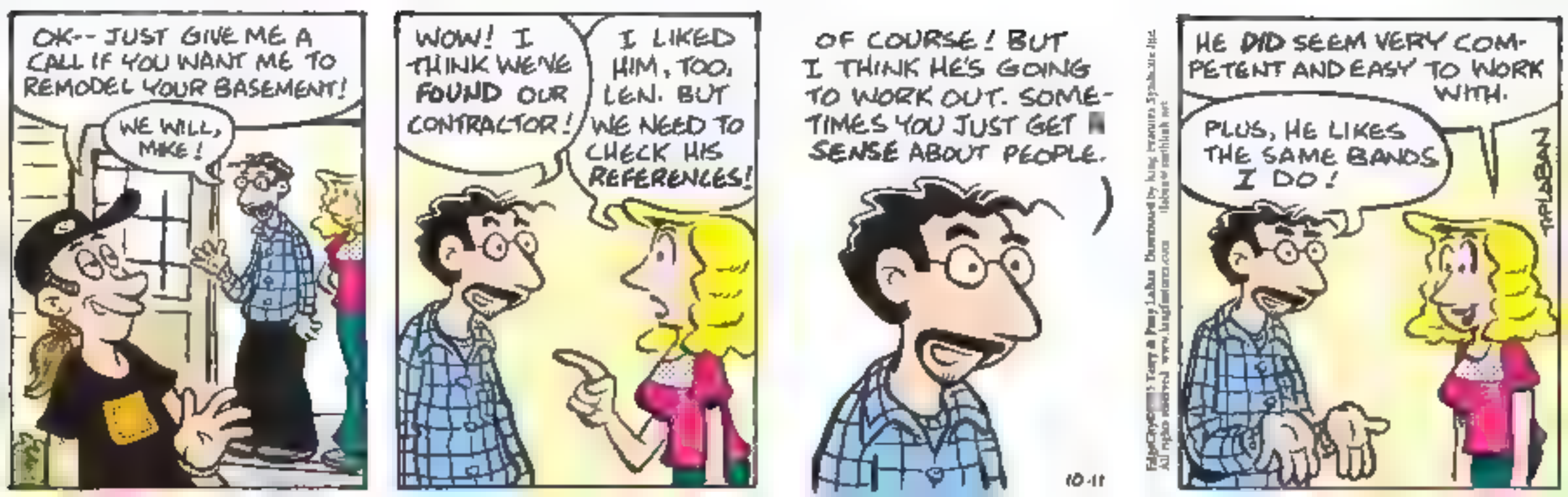
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR CONTRACTORS TO FINISH THE BASEMENT.
HOW'S IT GOING?
IT'S HARD--I DON'T JUST WANT TO CALL SOMEONE FROM THE YELLOW PAGES WHO I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.
THOUGH I DID GET THE NAME OF SOMEONE WHO'S SUPPOSED TO BE PRETTY GOOD.
10-6
WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT HIM?
FROM THIS GUY I STARTED CHATTING WITH IN THE HARDWARE STORE.

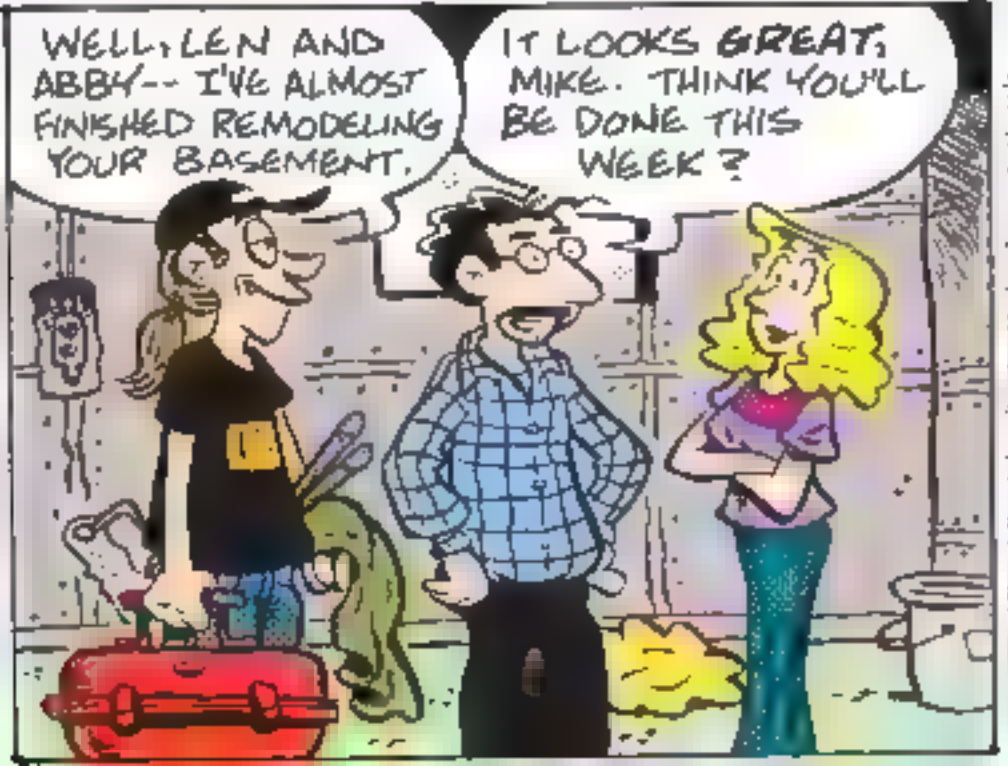

SO, GREGOR--WE WANT TO TURN OUR BACK BASEMENT INTO AN OFFICE. WE DON'T WANT ANYTHING FANCY.
MAYBE NOT FANCY, MR. ARDIN. BUT YOU CANNOT SKIMP ON QUALITY!
YOU'LL WANT CERAMIC TILES FOR THE FLOOR... A BATHROOM WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART FIXTURES... YOU'RE LOOKING AT AROUND $50,000.
$50,000?!
MR. ARDIN, I AM AN ARTIST!
HEH... LET US THINK ABOUT IT!
10.7


SO, MR. AND MRS. ARDIN--YOU WANT TO REMODEL YOUR BASEMENT?
YOUR AD IN THE YELLOW PAGES SAID REMODELING WAS YOUR COMPANY'S SPECIALTY.
TRUE, THOUGH WE SPECIALIZE IN BIG COMMERCIAL JOBS. FOR SOMETHING THIS SMALL, WE USUALLY JUST SEND A COUPLE OF GUYS WHO NEED EXTRA CASH.
10-8
HI, MONA! IS COLBY THERE?
OH. WELL, WHEN HE RECOVERS FROM HIS HANGOVER, TELL HIM I'VE GOT A BASEMENT HE CAN REMODEL!
WE'LL GET BACK TO YOU...

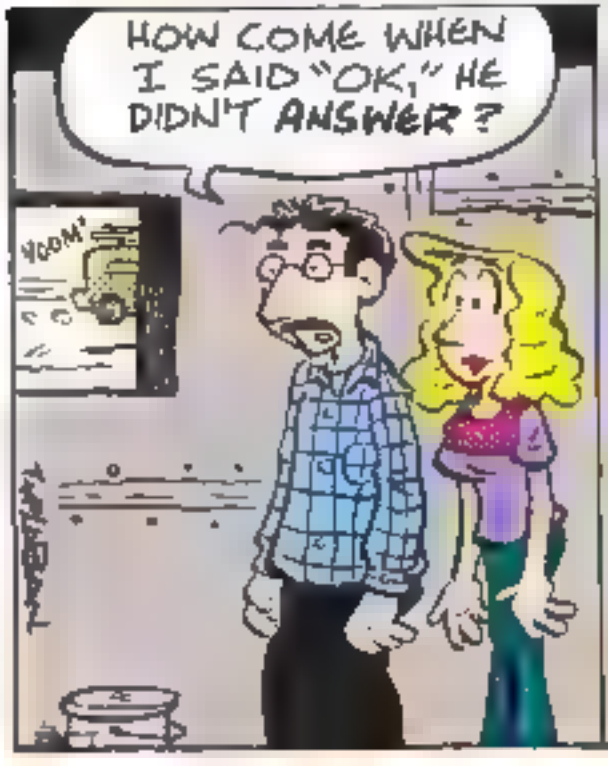

ANOTHER CONTRACTOR'S COMING TO BID ON THE BASEMENT?
YEAH. I'VE GOTTA SAY, THOUGH -- THIS WHOLE PROCESS IS STARTING TO BUM ME OUT!
10-9
THESE GUYS ARE EITHER EXPENSIVE PRIMA DONNAS OR BIG OPERATORS WHO THINK IT'S BARELY WORTH THEIR WHILE! I JUST WANNA FIND A CONTRACTOR I CAN RELATE TO!
DING DONG!
LEN AND ABBY? I'M MIKE. HEY, COOL RADIOHEAD STICKER ON YOUR MINIVAN.
COME ON IN!!


SO, YOU WANNA TURN YOUR BASEMENT INTO AN OFFICE, HUH?
YEAH. BUT WE'VE ONLY GOT A BUDGET OF ABOUT 20 GRAND.
OTHER CONTRACTORS HAVE TOLD US THAT WASN'T MUCH TO WORK WITH.
THAT'S PLENTY, MAN. IF I USE SOME MATERIALS LEFT OVER FROM MY LAST JOB, I CAN DO IT FOR [redacted] GRAND LESS!
10-10
IF YOU WANT, WE CAN PUT THE EXTRA CASH INTO A KICK-BOOTY SOUND SYSTEM.
WHEN CAN YOU STA...
REFERENCES, LEN! GET REFERENCES!

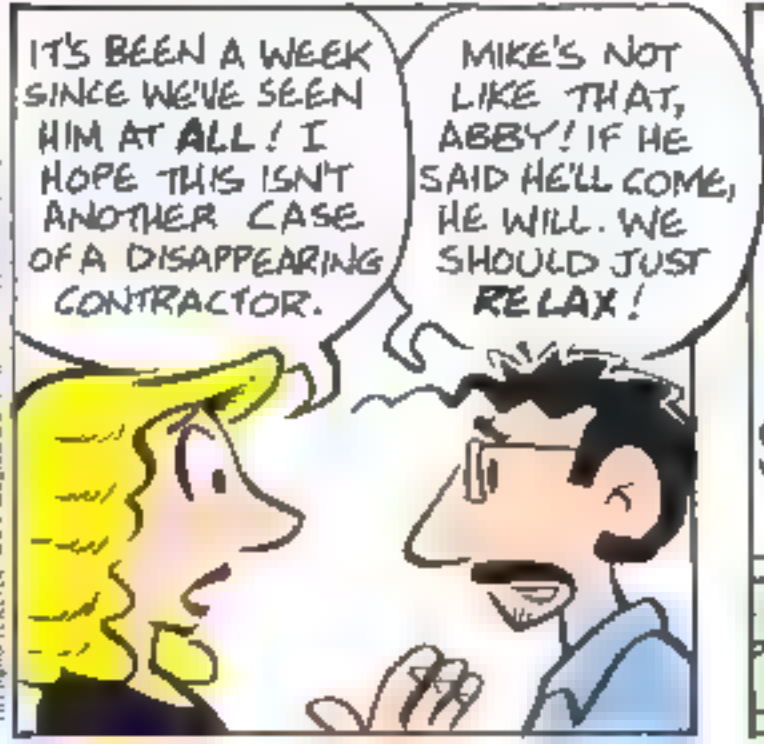

OK-- JUST GIVE ME A CALL IF YOU WANT ME TO REMODEL YOUR BASEMENT!
WE WILL, MIKE!
WOW! I THINK WE'VE FOUND OUR CONTRACTOR!
I LIKED HIM, TOO, LEN. BUT WE NEED TO CHECK HIS REFERENCES!
OF COURSE! BUT I THINK HE'S GOING TO WORK OUT. SOMETIMES YOU JUST GET A SENSE ABOUT PEOPLE.
10-11
HE DID SEEM VERY COMPETENT AND EASY TO WORK WITH.
PLUS, HE LIKES THE SAME BANDS I DO!
TAPLABAN

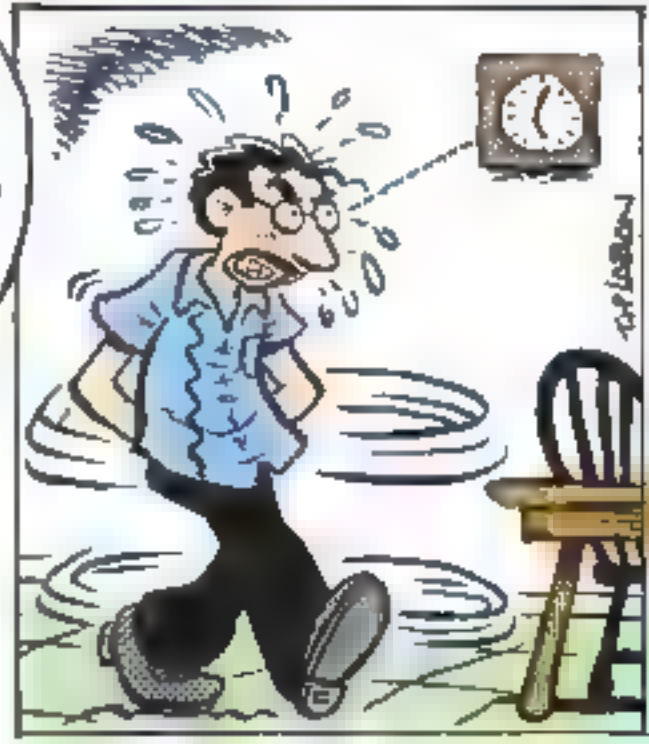

WELL, LEN AND ABBY-- I'VE ALMOST FINISHED REMODELING YOUR BASEMENT.
IT LOOKS GREAT, MIKE. THINK YOU'LL BE DONE THIS WEEK?

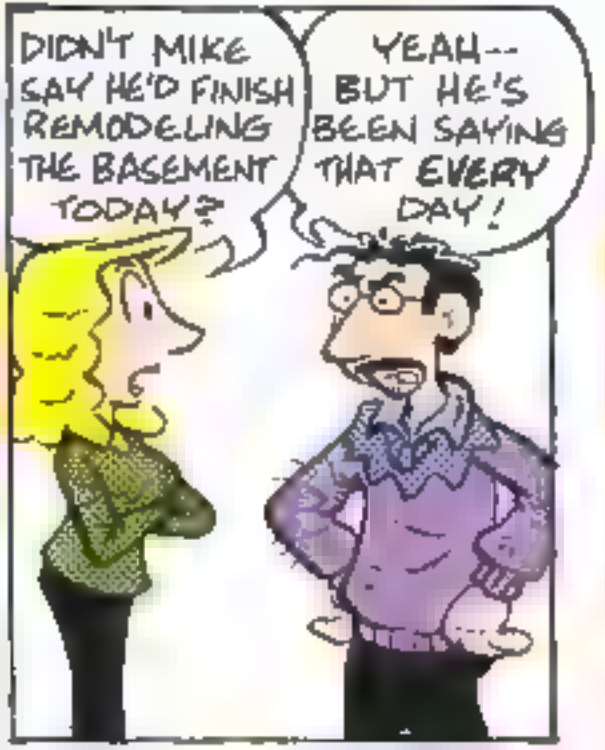
I'VE GOT ANOTHER JOB OVER THE NEXT 2 DAYS. CAN I COME BACK FRIDAY?
I GUESS SO. BUT NO LONGER THAN THAT, OK?
10-13


HOW COME WHEN I SAID "OK," HE DIDN'T ANSWER?
VOOM!

ISN'T MIKE SUPPOSED TO FINISH REMODELING THE BASEMENT THIS MORNING?
HE JUST CALLED AND SAID HE COULDN'T MAKE IT TILL THIS AFTERNOON.
10-14


IT'S BEEN A WEEK SINCE WE'VE SEEN HIM AT ALL! I HOPE THIS ISN'T ANOTHER CASE OF A DISAPPEARING CONTRACTOR.
MIKE'S NOT LIKE THAT, ABBY! IF HE SAID HE'LL COME, HE WILL. WE SHOULD JUST RELAX!



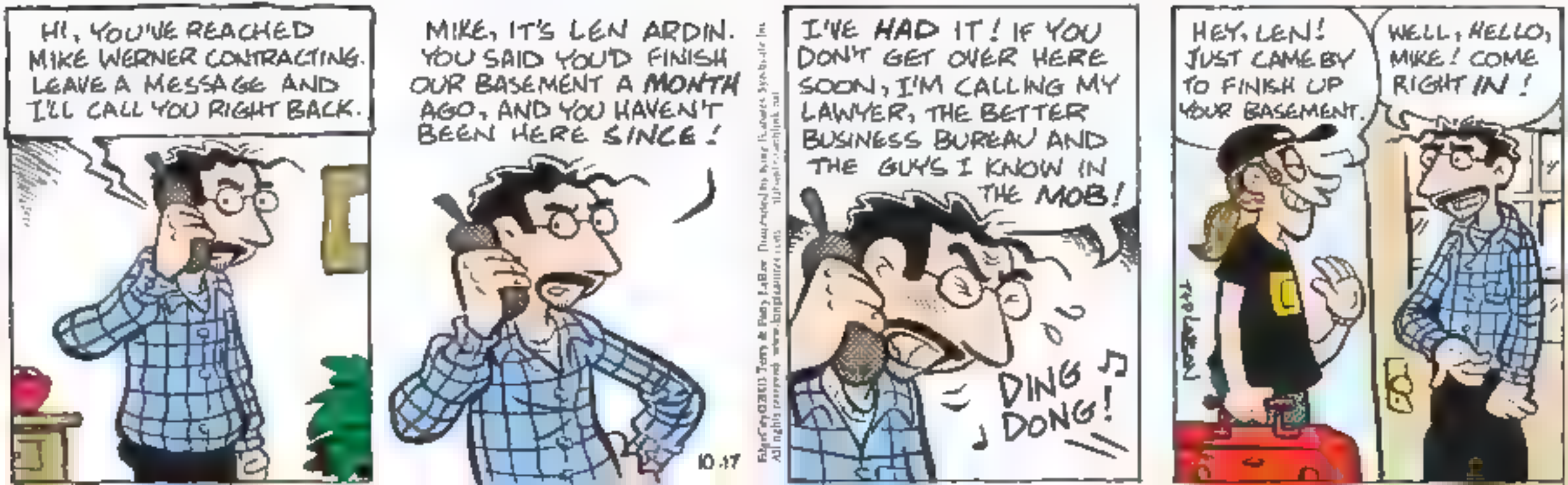

DIDN'T MIKE SAY HE'D FINISH REMODELING THE BASEMENT TODAY?
YEAH-- BUT HE'S BEEN SAYING THAT EVERY DAY!

I'M GOING TO CALL AND SEE WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON!
10-15

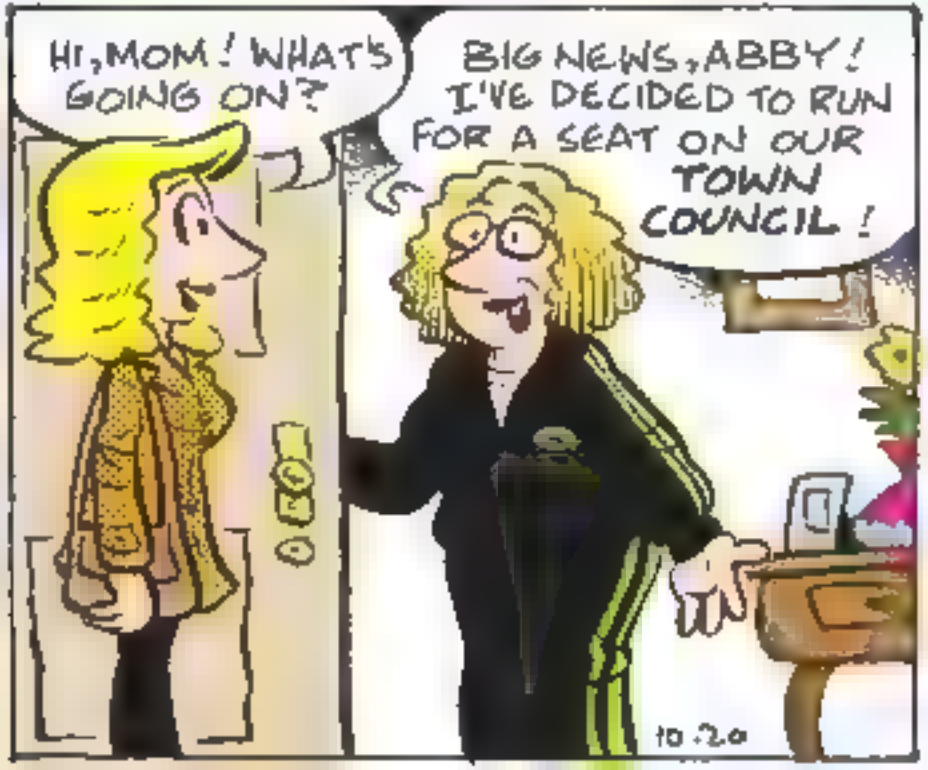
HI! YOU'VE REACHED MIKE WERNER CONTRACTING. IF YOU WANT A FREE ESTIMATE, LEAVE YOUR NUMBER AND I'LL CALL YOU RIGHT BACK.

IF YOU'RE CALLING TO FIND OUT WHEN A JOB WILL BE FINISHED, DON'T WORRY--I'LL BE THERE TODAY!
BAD NEWS?
THOLABRON

WHEN HE STARTED REMODELING OUR BASEMENT, MIKE CAME EVERY DAY. BUT NOW THAT IT'S ALMOST FINISHED, WE NEVER SEE HIM!
IT'S NO SURRISE, LEN.
THAT'S WHAT ALL CONTRACTORS DO. WHEN THEY GET PAID MOST OF WHAT THEY'RE OWED, THEY MOVE ON TO ANOTHER JOB.
I THOUGHT MIKE WAS DIFFERENT!
BUT NO--NOW THAT HE'S GOTTEN WHAT HE WANTS FROM US, HE DOESN'T EVEN CALL!
10.16
I THINK YOU'RE MAKING THIS WAY TOO PERSONAL!
I JUST FEEL SO USED.

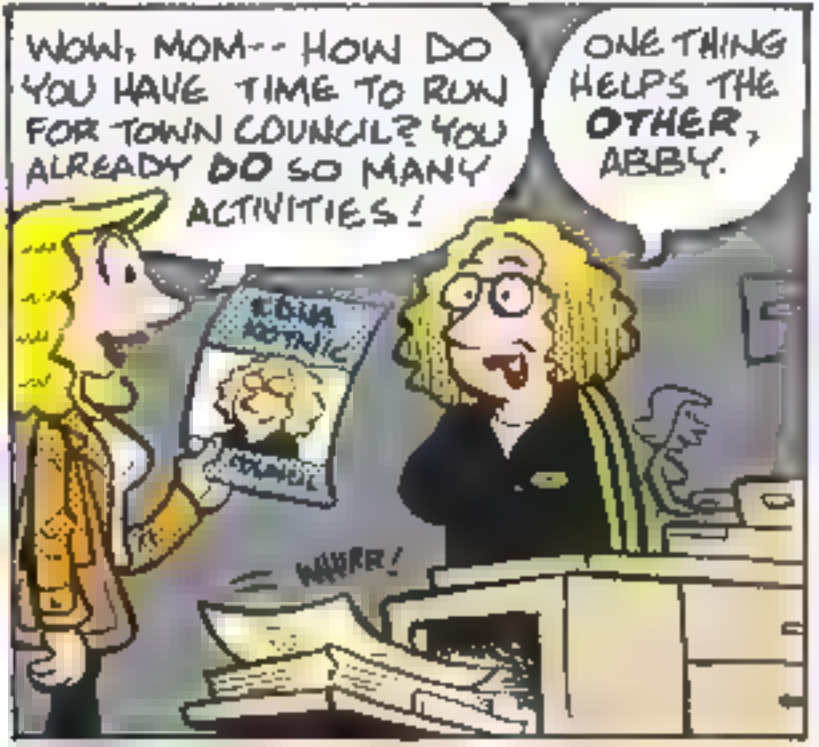

HI, YOU'VE REACHED MIKE WERNER CONTRACTING. LEAVE A MESSAGE AND I'LL CALL YOU RIGHT BACK.
MIKE, IT'S LEN ARDIN. YOU SAID YOU'D FINISH OUR BASEMENT A MONTH AGO, AND YOU HAVEN'T BEEN HERE SINCE!
10.17
I'VE HAD IT! IF YOU DON'T GET OVER HERE SOON, I'M CALLING MY LAWYER, THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU AND THE GUYS I KNOW IN THE MOB!
DING DONG!
HEY, LEN! JUST CAME BY TO FINISH UP YOUR BASEMENT.
WELL, HELLO, MIKE! COME RIGHT IN!

WOW, ABBY-- DIDN'T MIKE DO A GREAT JOB REMODELING THE BASEMENT?
YEAH -- TOO BAD IT WAS SUCH A HASSLE GETTING HIM TO FINISH IT!
I GUESS IT WAS.
YOU GUESS? LEN, WE JUST SPENT A WHOLE MONTH TEARING OUR HAIR OUT!
WELL, NOW I THINK OF IT AS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE. WE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME.
WHAT NEXT TIME?
I CALLED SOME GUYS TO COME BID ON THE KITCHEN.
10-18


HI, MOM! WHAT'S GOING ON?
BIG NEWS, ABBY! I'VE DECIDED TO RUN FOR A SEAT ON OUR TOWN COUNCIL!
10-20

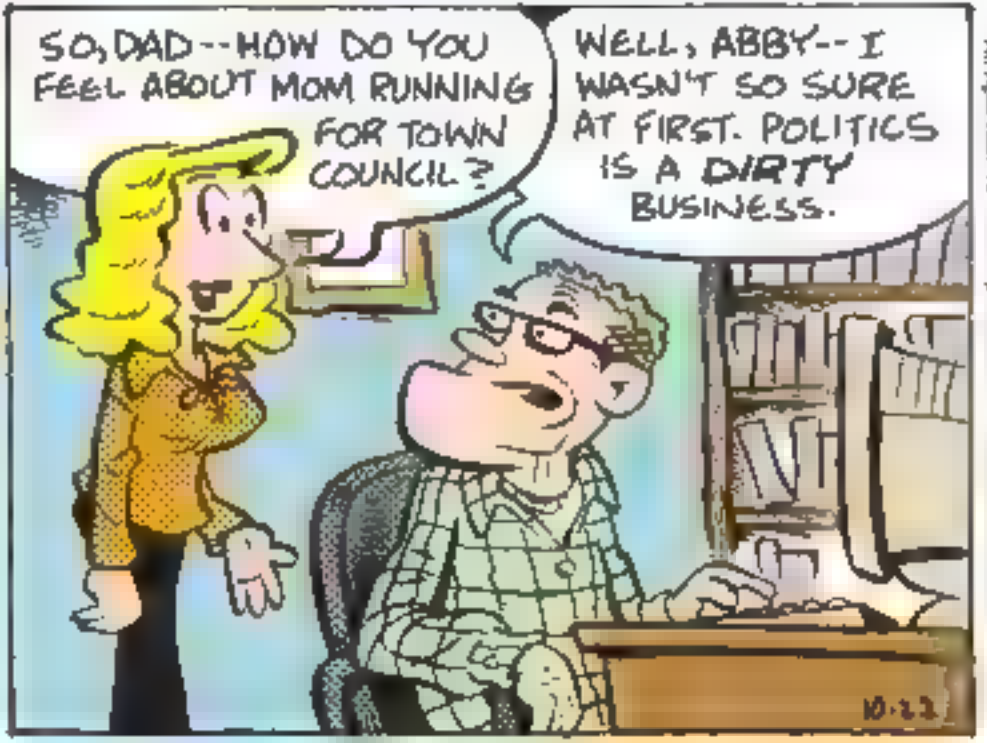
WOW! WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO DO THAT?
I JUST GOT TIRED OF LISTENING TO PEOPLE GRIPE ABOUT THINGS WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING TO MAKE THEM BETTER.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PEOPLE IN MIND?
WHY DO THOSE DARN GARBAGEMEN HAVE TO MAKE SO MUCH NOISE?
THOLEMAN


WOW, MOM-- HOW DO YOU HAVE TIME TO RUN FOR TOWN COUNCIL? YOU ALREADY DO SO MANY ACTIVITIES!
ONE THING HELPS THE OTHER, ABBY.
WHIRR!

FOR INSTANCE, I ASKED THE PEOPLE IN THE CLASSES I TAKE AT THE SENIOR CENTER FOR THE SIGNATURES I NEEDED TO GET ON THE BALLOT.
HOW'D IT GO?
10-21

GREAT! BY THE TIME I WAS DONE WITH SPINNING, CERAMICS, JAZZERCIZE, CREATIVE WRITING AND TAEBO, I HAD ALL I NEEDED!
TAP TAP!



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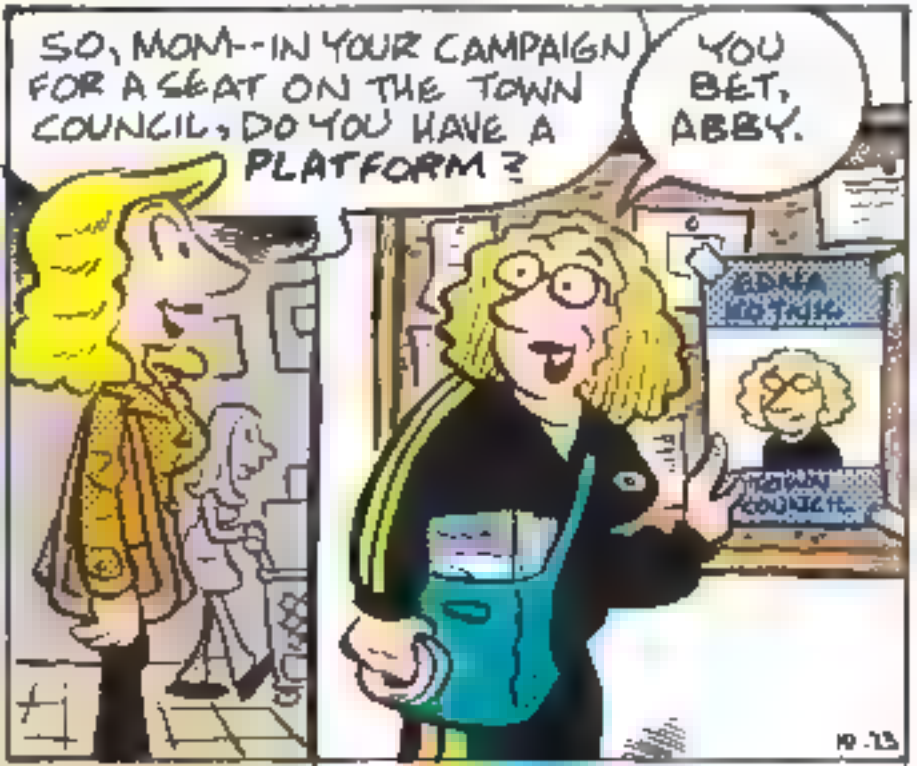
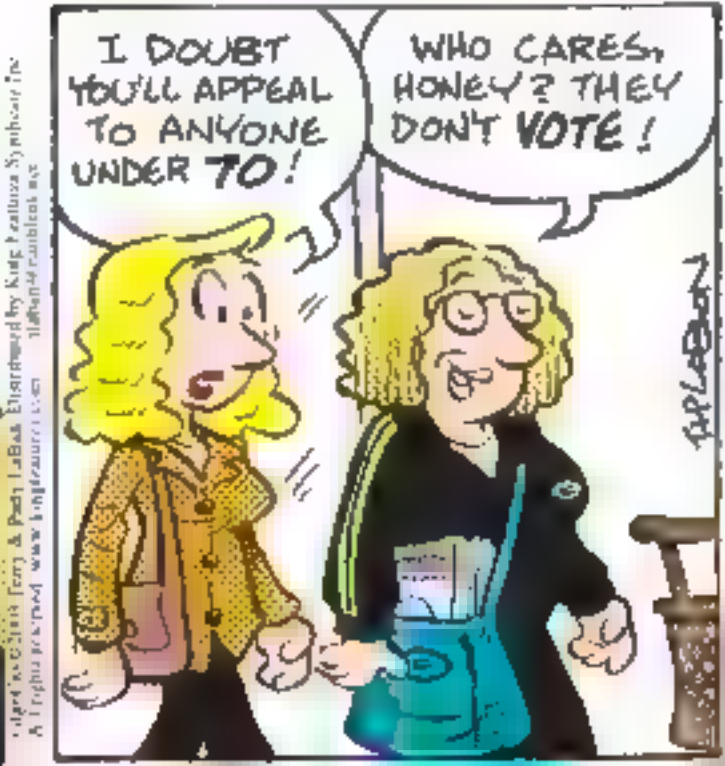
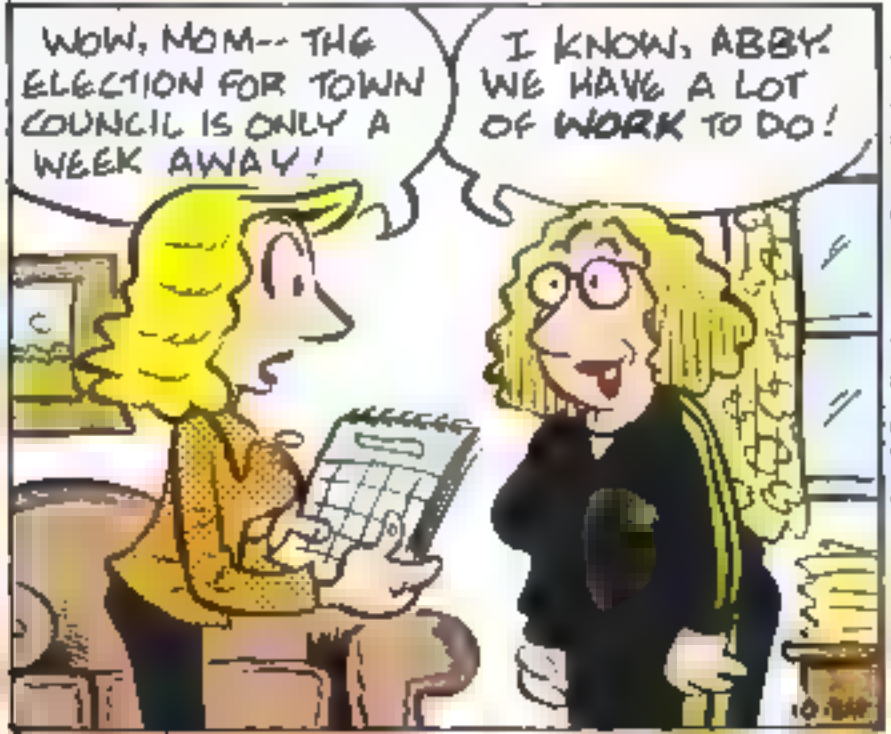
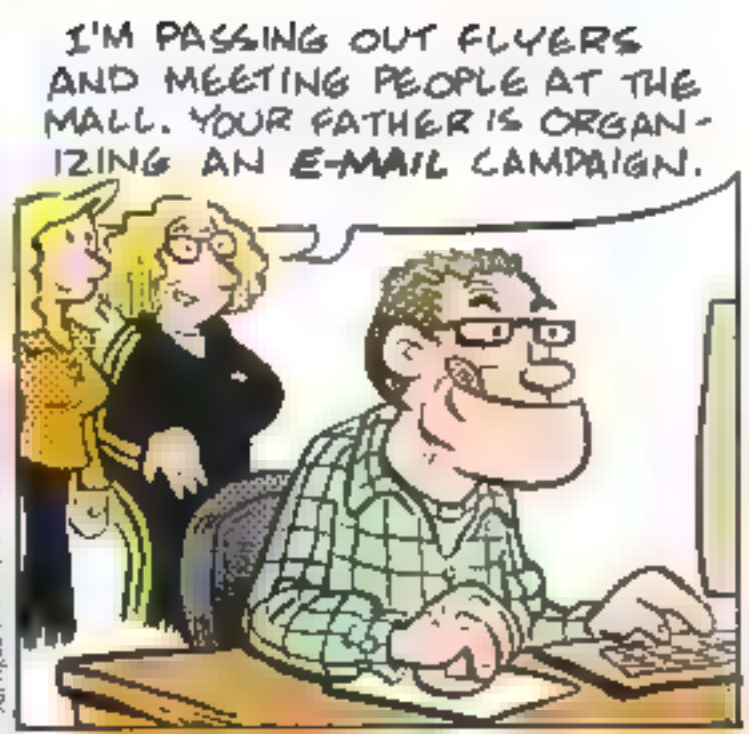
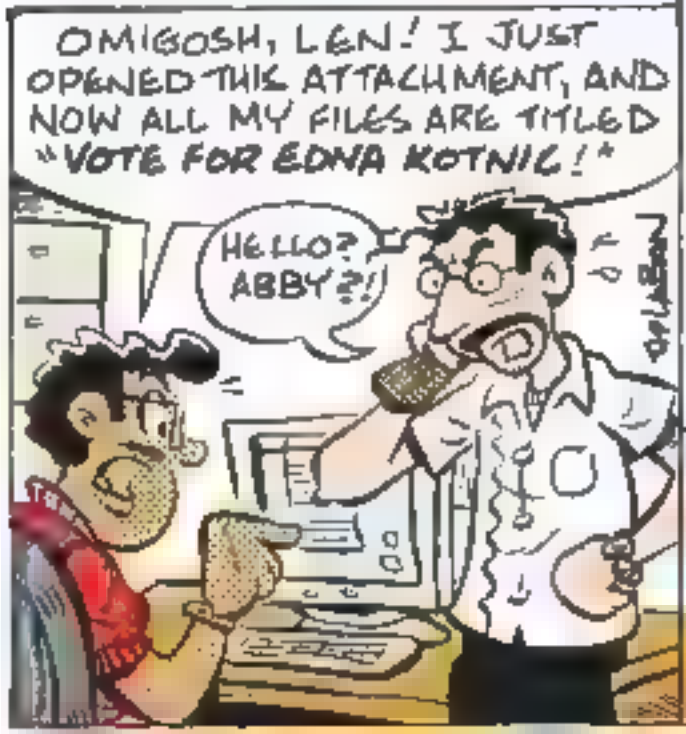

SO, MOM--IN YOUR CAMPAIGN FOR A SEAT ON THE TOWN COUNCIL, DO YOU HAVE A PLATFORM?
YOU BET, ABBY.
EDNA LOSTNIK
10-13

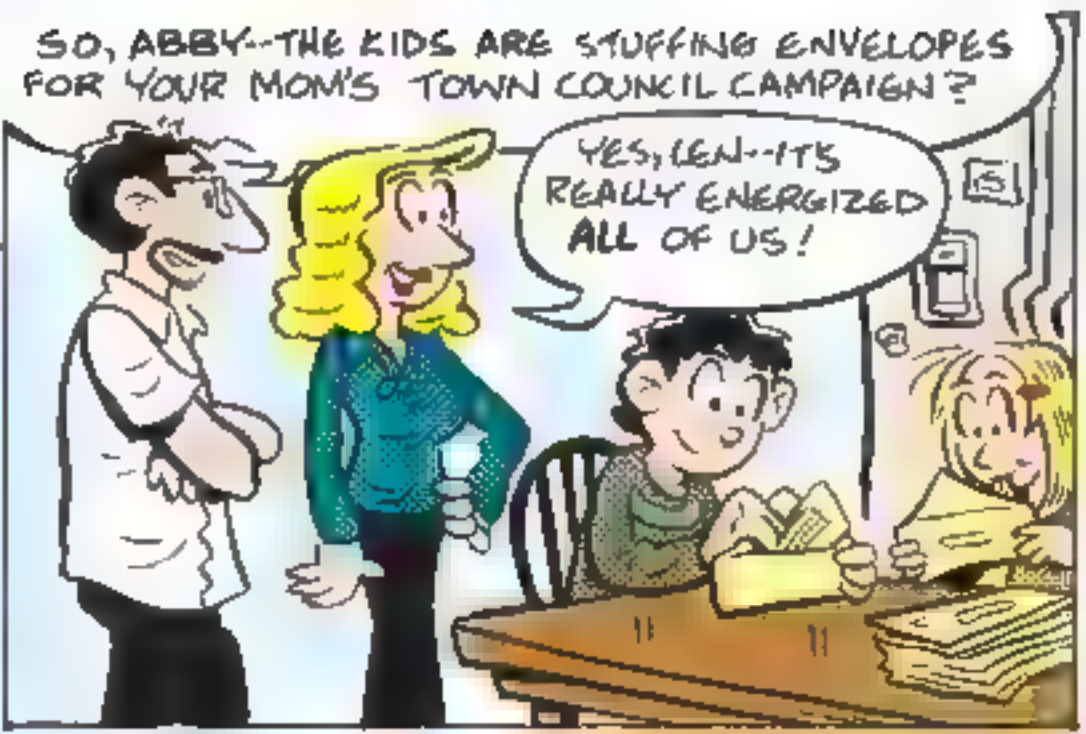
IF ELECTED I'LL WORK TO MAKE PRUNE JUICE AVAILABLE IN ALL VENDING MACHINES... INSTALL DEFIBRILLATORS IN ALL PUBLIC PLACES... AND PUBLISH ALL TOWN DOCUMENTS IN LARGE PRINT!

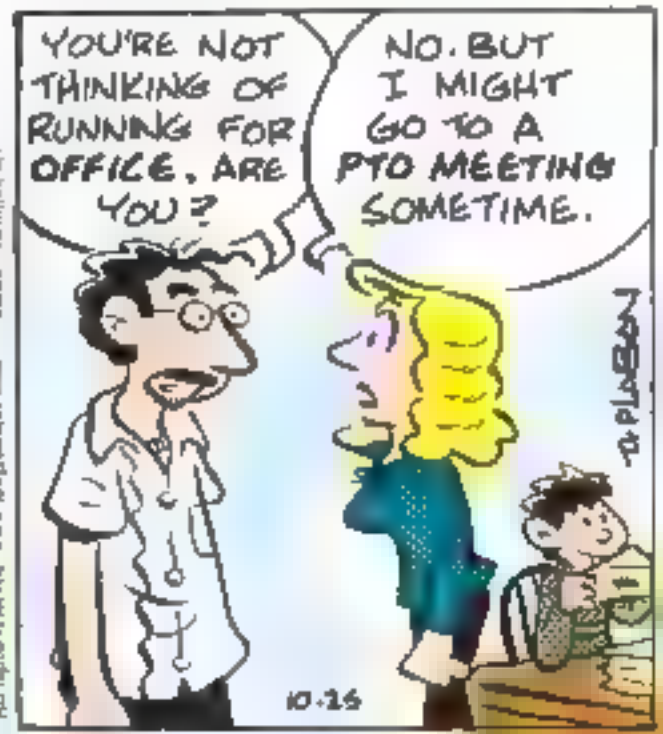

I DOUBT YOU'LL APPEAL TO ANYONE UNDER 70!
WHO CARES, HONEY? THEY DON'T VOTE!
TOLABON


WOW, MOM-- THE ELECTION FOR TOWN COUNCIL IS ONLY A WEEK AWAY!
I KNOW, ABBY. WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO!


I'M PASSING OUT FLYERS AND MEETING PEOPLE AT THE MALL. YOUR FATHER IS ORGANIZING AN E-MAIL CAMPAIGN.


OMIGOSH, LEN! I JUST OPENED THIS ATTACHMENT, AND NOW ALL MY FILES ARE TITLED "VOTE FOR EDNA KOTNIC!"
HELLO? ABBY?!





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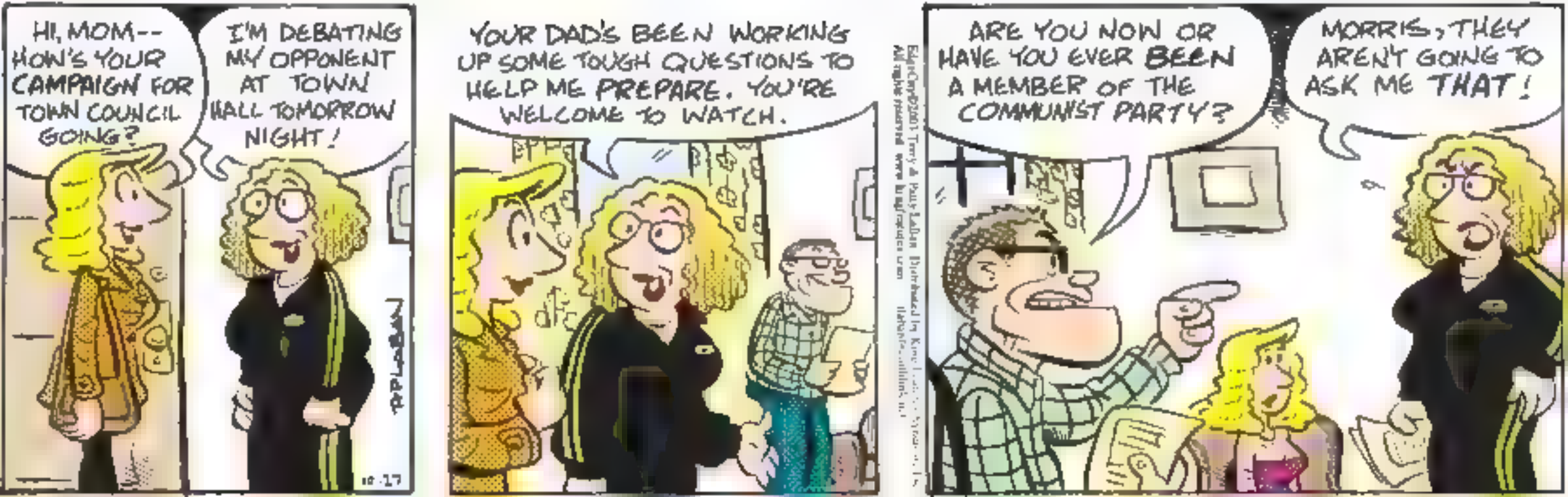
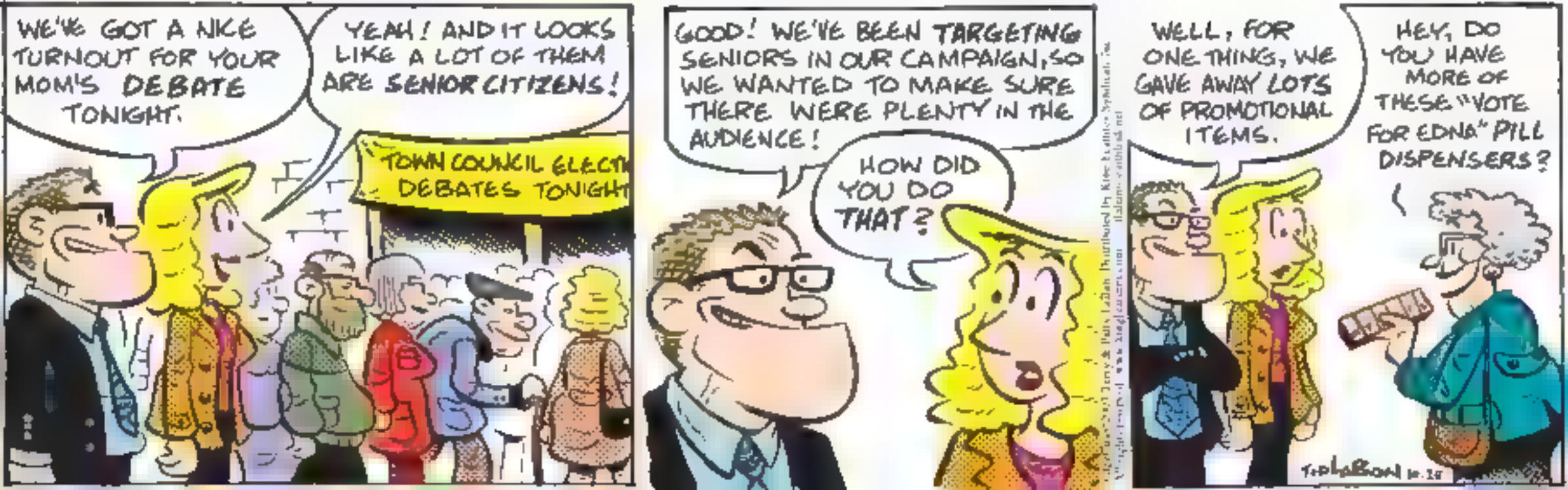
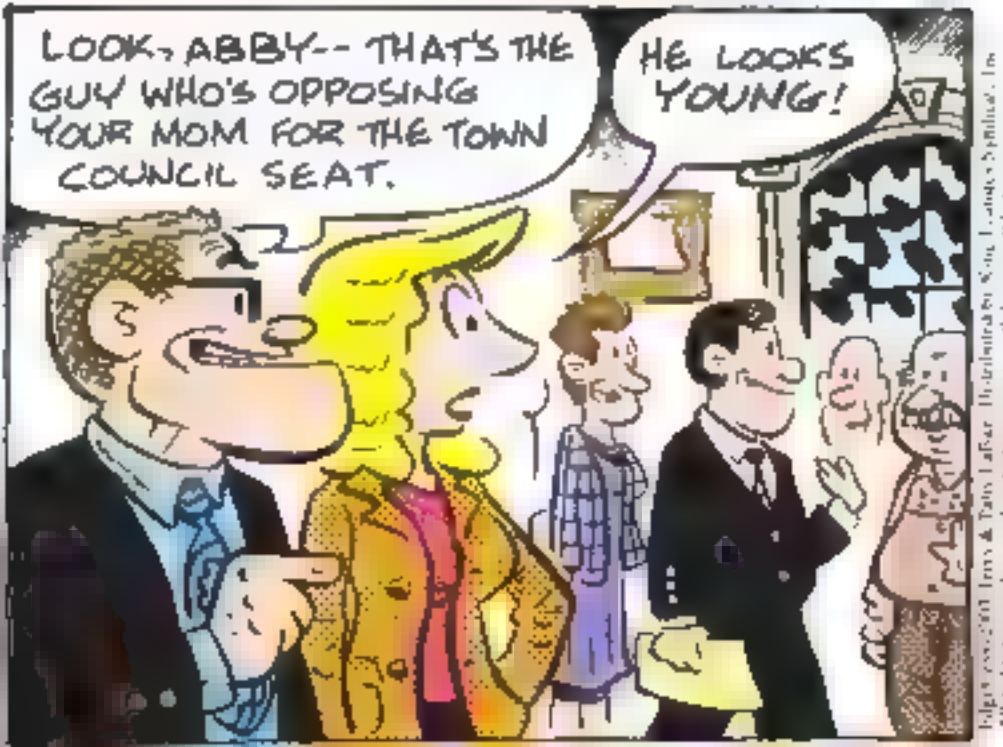
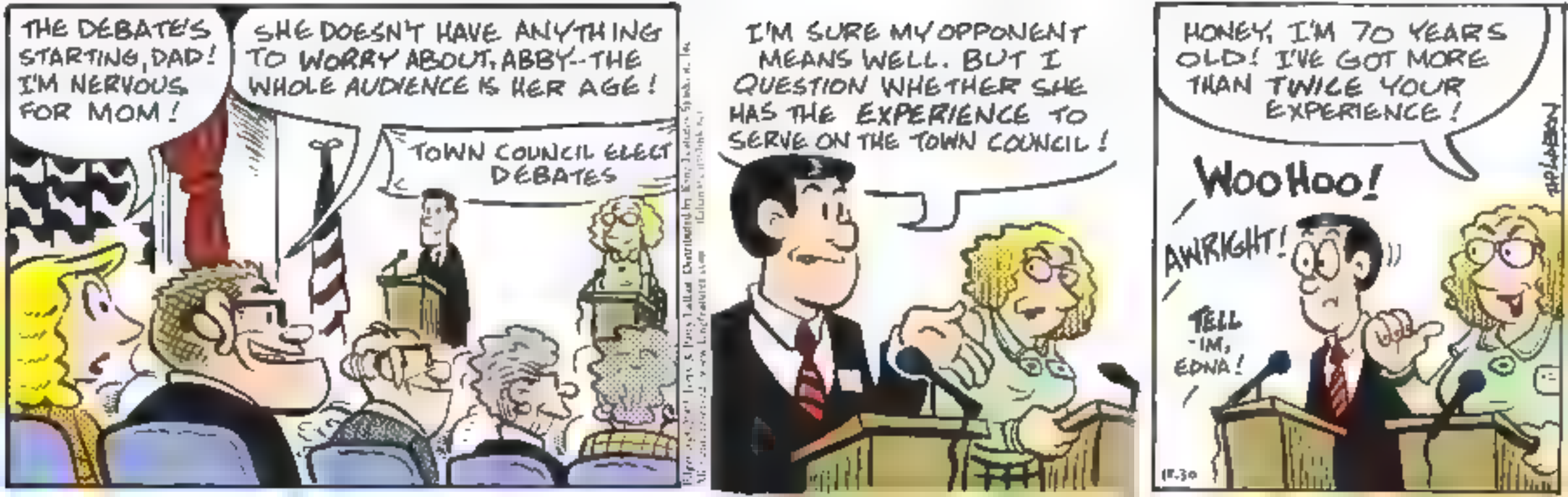

HI, MOM-- HOW'S YOUR CAMPAIGN FOR TOWN COUNCIL GOING?
I'M DEBATING MY OPPONENT AT TOWN HALL TOMORROW NIGHT!
YOUR DAD'S BEEN WORKING UP SOME TOUGH QUESTIONS TO HELP ME PREPARE. YOU'RE WELCOME TO WATCH.
ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY?
MORRIS, THEY AREN'T GOING TO ASK ME THAT!

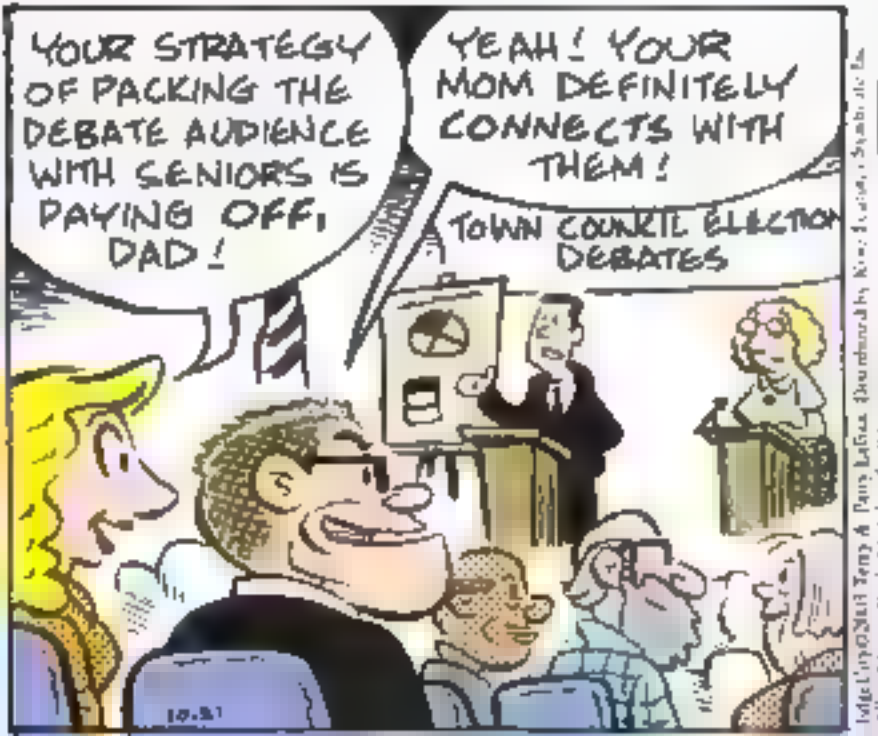

WE'VE GOT A NICE TURNOUT FOR YOUR MOM'S DEBATE TONIGHT.
YEAH! AND IT LOOKS LIKE A LOT OF THEM ARE SENIOR CITIZENS!
TOWN COUNCIL ELECTI DEBATES TONIGHT
GOOD! WE'VE BEEN TARGETING SENIORS IN OUR CAMPAIGN, SO WE WANTED TO MAKE SURE THERE WERE PLENTY IN THE AUDIENCE!
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?
WELL, FOR ONE THING, WE GAVE AWAY LOTS OF PROMOTIONAL ITEMS.
HEY, DO YOU HAVE MORE OF THESE "VOTE FOR EDNA" PILL DISPENSERS?

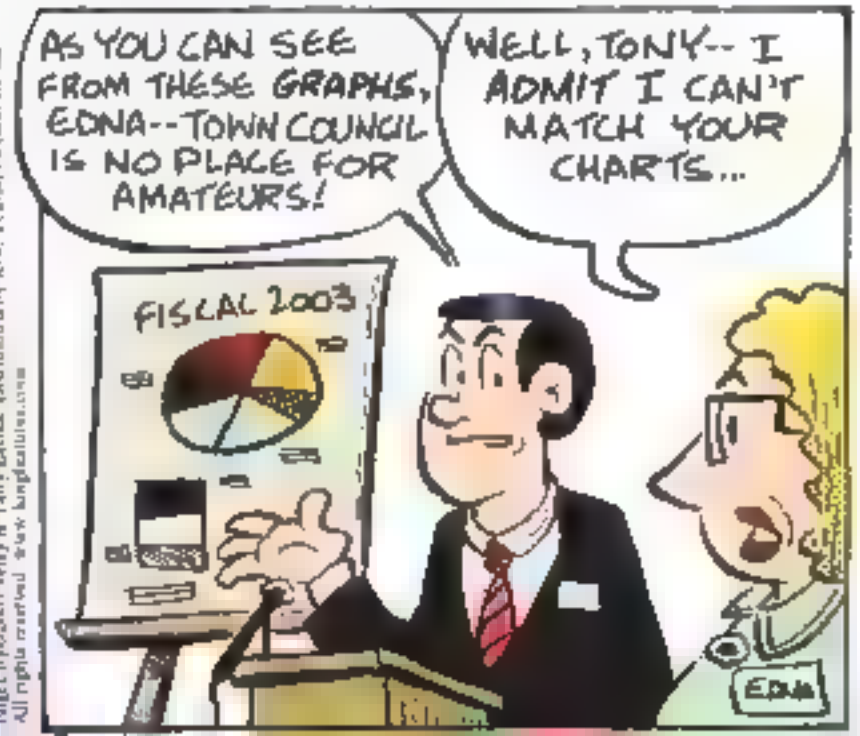

LOOK, ABBY-- THAT'S THE GUY WHO'S OPPOSING YOUR MOM FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL SEAT.
HE LOOKS YOUNG!

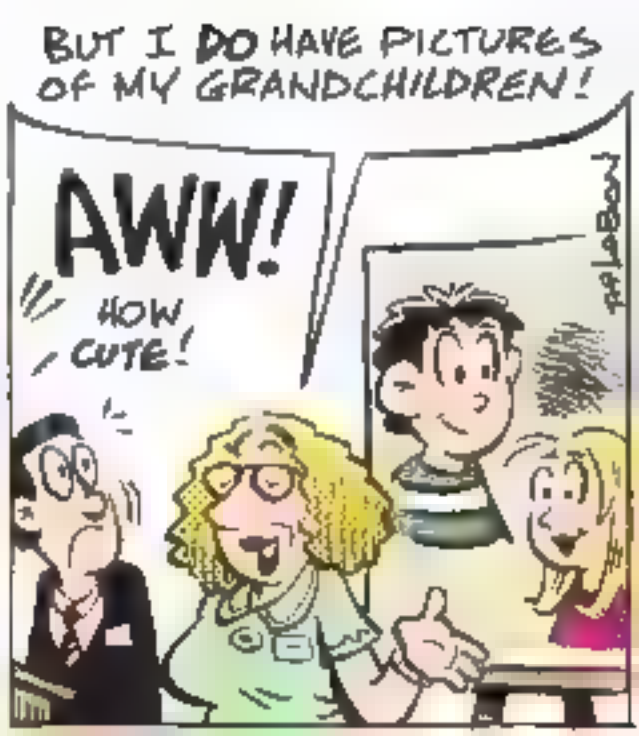
WELL, THE MAJORITY OF THE VOTERS WILL BE SENIORS. THEY'LL BE ATTRACTED TO SOMEONE WHO SHARES THEIR AGE AND EXPERIENCE.

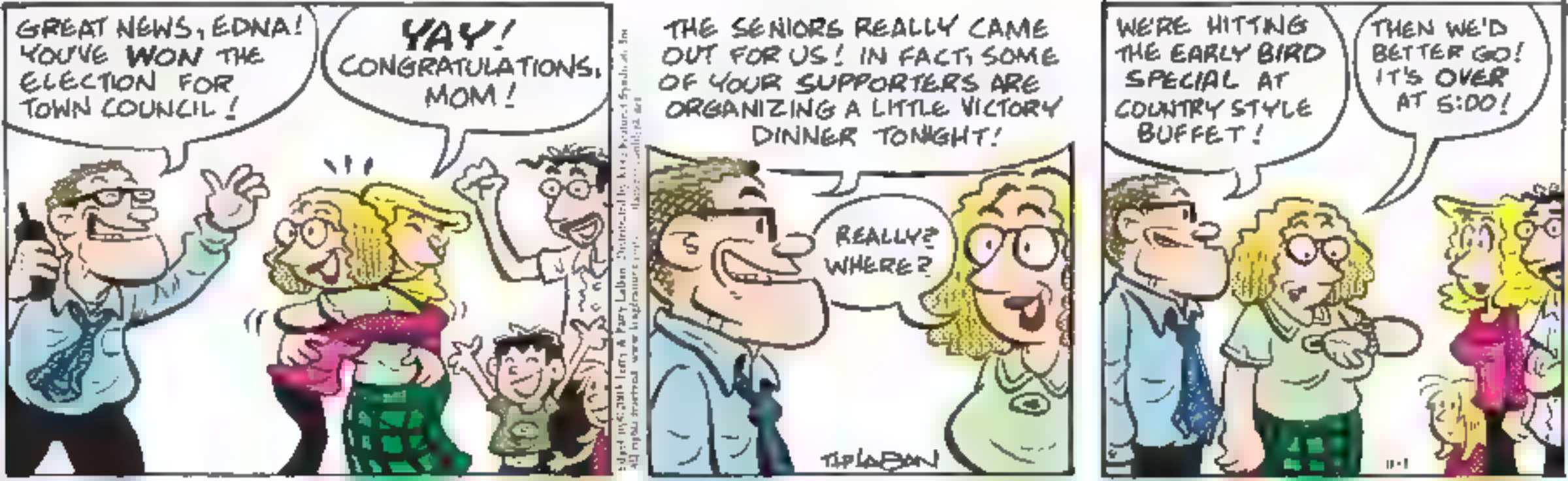
MOST OF THEM, ANYWAY.
♪ YOO HOO! MISTER CANDIDATE! ♫
HE IS SOOO HOT!

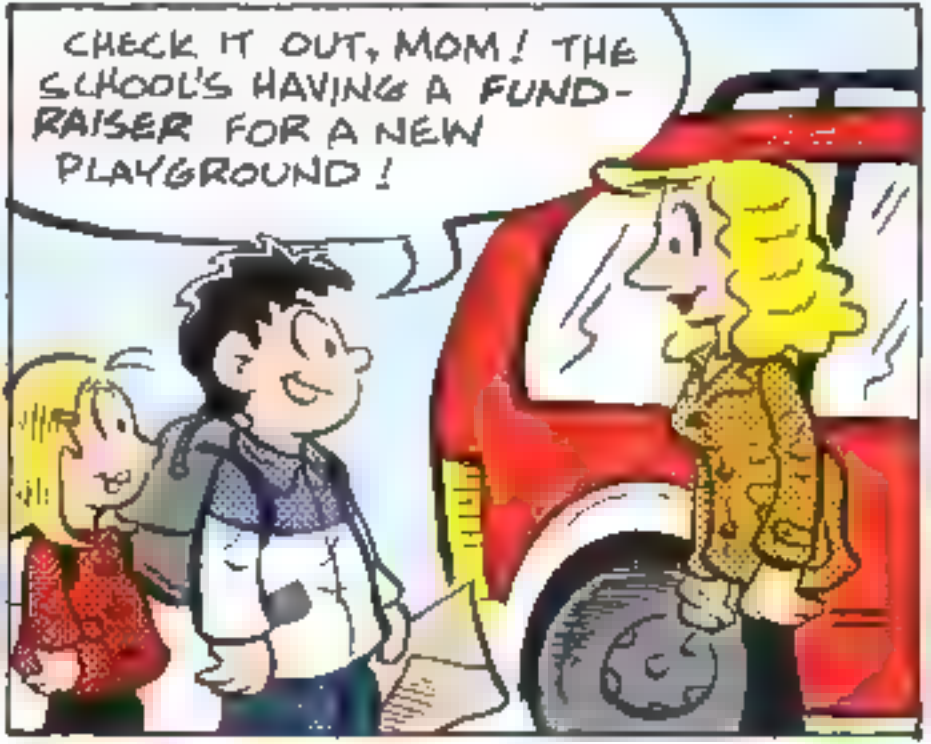

THE DEBATE'S STARTING, DAD! I'M NERVOUS FOR MOM!
SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, ABBY--THE WHOLE AUDIENCE IS HER AGE!
TOWN COUNCIL ELECT DEBATES
I'M SURE MY OPPONENT MEANS WELL. BUT I QUESTION WHETHER SHE HAS THE EXPERIENCE TO SERVE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL!
HONEY, I'M 70 YEARS OLD! I'VE GOT MORE THAN TWICE YOUR EXPERIENCE!
WOOHOO!
AWRIGHT!
TELL 'IM, EDNA!

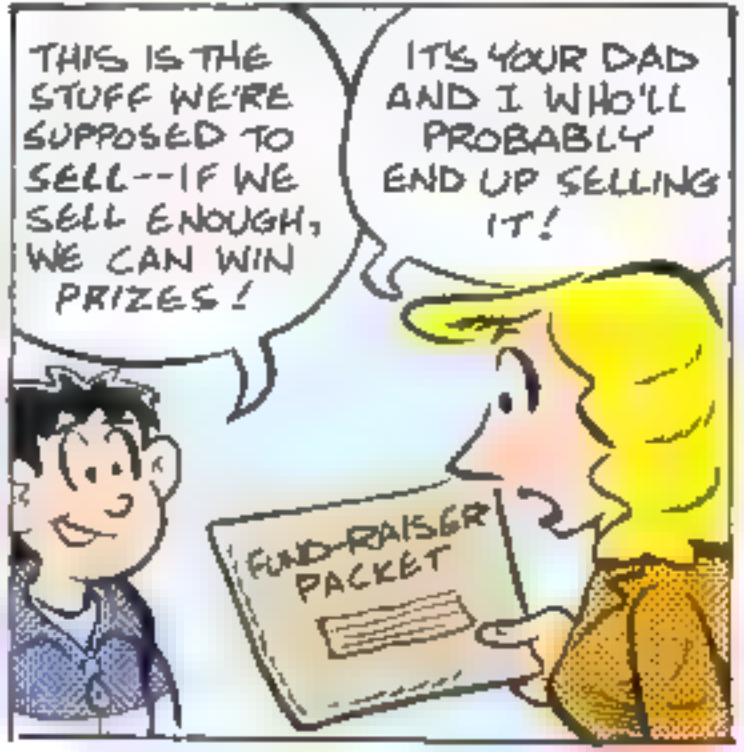

YOUR STRATEGY OF PACKING THE DEBATE AUDIENCE WITH SENIORS IS PAYING OFF, DAD!
YEAH! YOUR MOM DEFINITELY CONNECTS WITH THEM!
TOWN COUNCIL ELECTION DEBATES


AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THESE GRAPHS, EDNA--TOWN COUNCIL IS NO PLACE FOR AMATEURS!
WELL, TONY-- I ADMIT I CAN'T MATCH YOUR CHARTS...
FISCAL 2003
EDNA

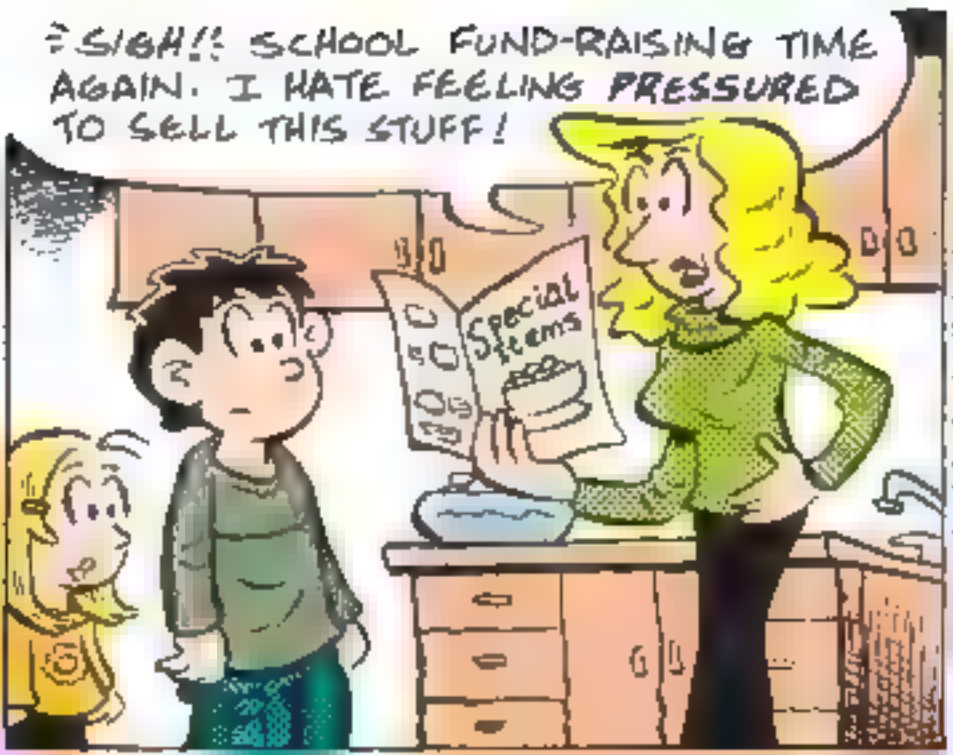

BUT I DO HAVE PICTURES OF MY GRANDCHILDREN!
AWW!
HOW CUTE!


GREAT NEWS, EDNA! YOU'VE WON THE ELECTION FOR TOWN COUNCIL!
YAY! CONGRATULATIONS, MOM!
THE SENIORS REALLY CAME OUT FOR US! IN FACT, SOME OF YOUR SUPPORTERS ARE ORGANIZING A LITTLE VICTORY DINNER TONIGHT!
REALLY? WHERE?
TIP LABAN
WE'RE HITTING THE EARLY BIRD SPECIAL AT COUNTRY STYLE BUFFET!
THEN WE'D BETTER GO! IT'S OVER AT 5:00!

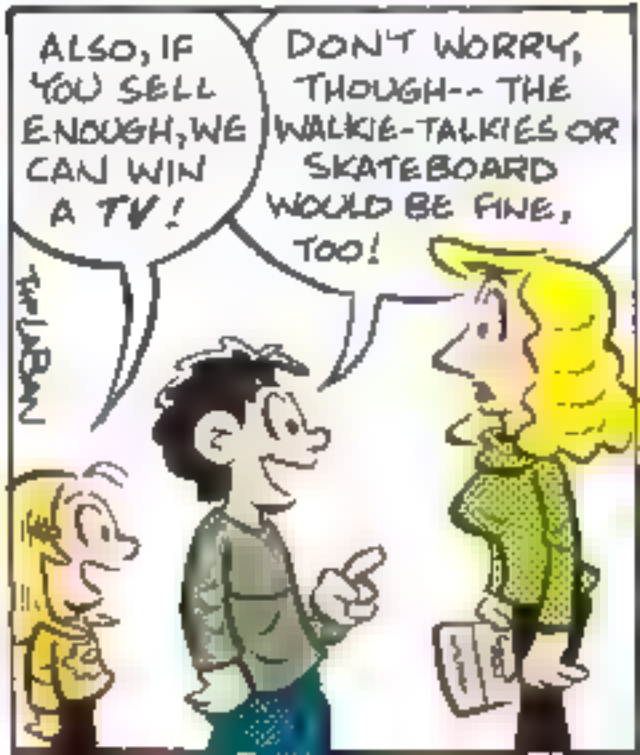

CHECK IT OUT, MOM! THE SCHOOL'S HAVING A FUND-RAISER FOR A NEW PLAYGROUND!


THIS IS THE STUFF WE'RE SUPPOSED TO SELL--IF WE SELL ENOUGH, WE CAN WIN PRIZES!
IT'S YOUR DAD AND I WHO'LL PROBABLY END UP SELLING IT!
FUND-RAISER PACKET

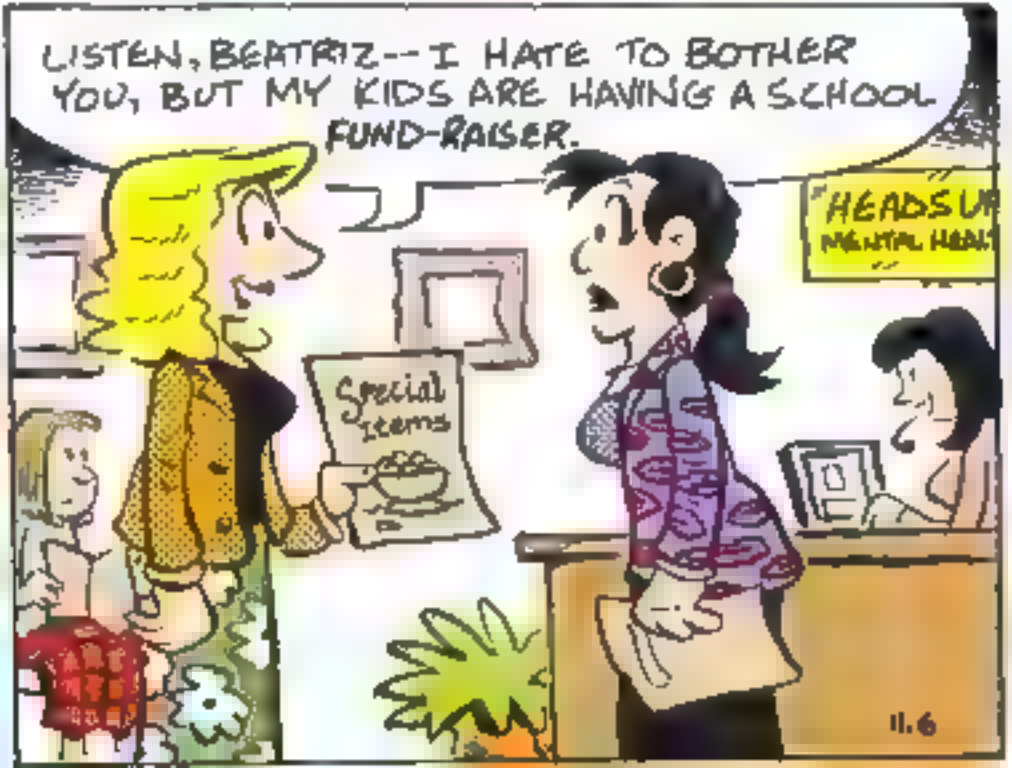
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "PROBABLY"?
THE LABBAN
11.3


SIGH!! SCHOOL FUND-RAISING TIME AGAIN. I HATE FEELING PRESSURED TO SELL THIS STUFF!
Special Items

BUT MOM-- IT'S IMPORTANT TO SELL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
I KNOW, HONEY-- YOUR SCHOOL NEEDS THE MONEY FOR A NEW PLAYGROUND.


ALSO, IF YOU SELL ENOUGH, WE CAN WIN A TV!
DON'T WORRY, THOUGH-- THE WALKIE-TALKIES OR SKATEBOARD WOULD BE FINE, TOO!

LEN, THE KIDS' SCHOOL IS HAVING A FUND-RAISER. WE SHOULD EACH TRY TO SELL STUFF AT WORK.
IT'S THEIR FUND-RAISER! WHY DON'T THEY DO IT?
Special items
BECAUSE NEITHER OF US HAS TIME TO TAKE OFF WORK AND ESCORT THEM DOOR-TO-DOOR!
IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM FAIR!
WE PAY ENOUGH TAXES TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT-- WE HAVE TO RAISE FUNDS, TOO?
THE SHORT ANSWER IS "YES."
SIGH! WELL, I KNOW OUR RECEPTIONIST JUST LOVES MONOGRAMMED TEDDY BEARS!


LISTEN, BEATRIZ--I HATE TO BOTHER YOU, BUT MY KIDS ARE HAVING A SCHOOL FUND-RAISER.
Special Items
11.6

IF YOU COULD JUST BUY A LITTLE SOMETHING, IT'D REALLY HELP US OUT.
SURE, ABBY--I'D BE HAPPY TO!

IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND BUYING SOMETHING FOR THE FUND-RAISER MY NIECE IS HAVING AT CHURCH!
Fancy PRODUCTS

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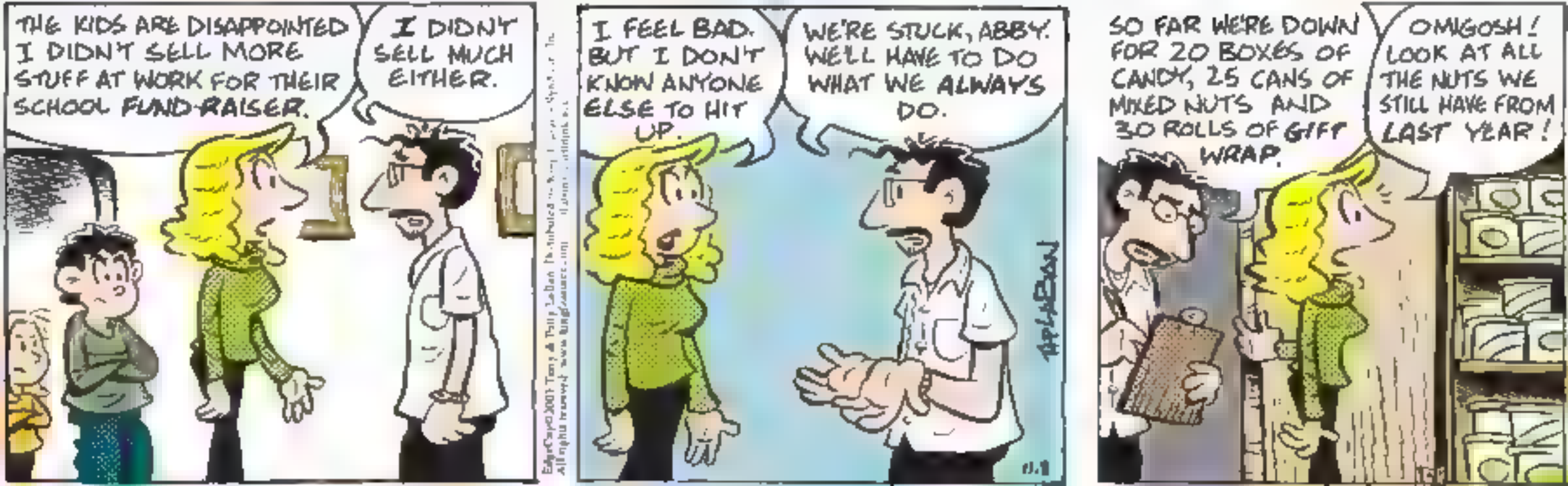
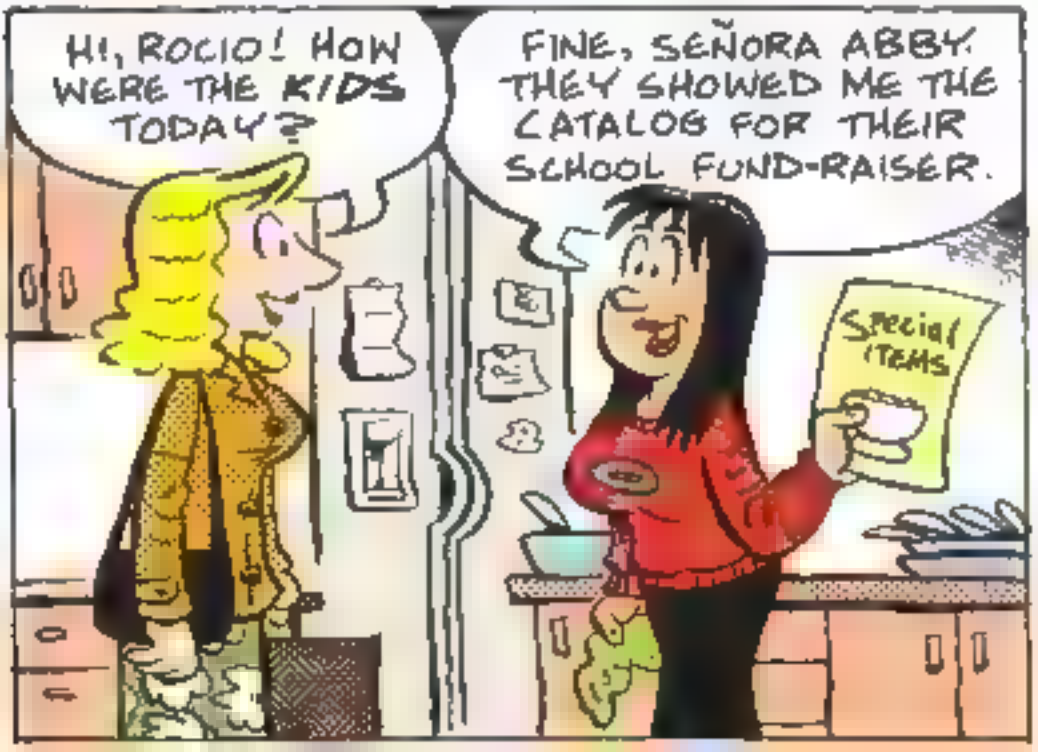
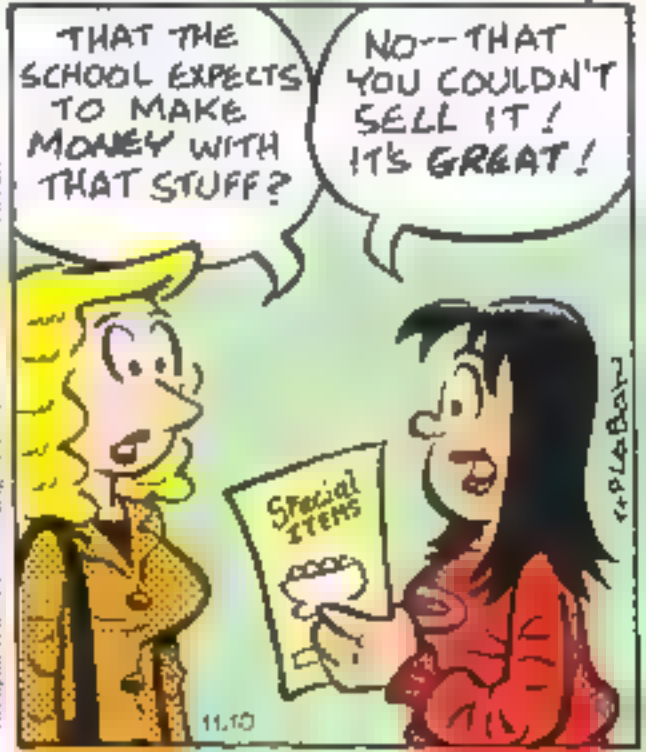
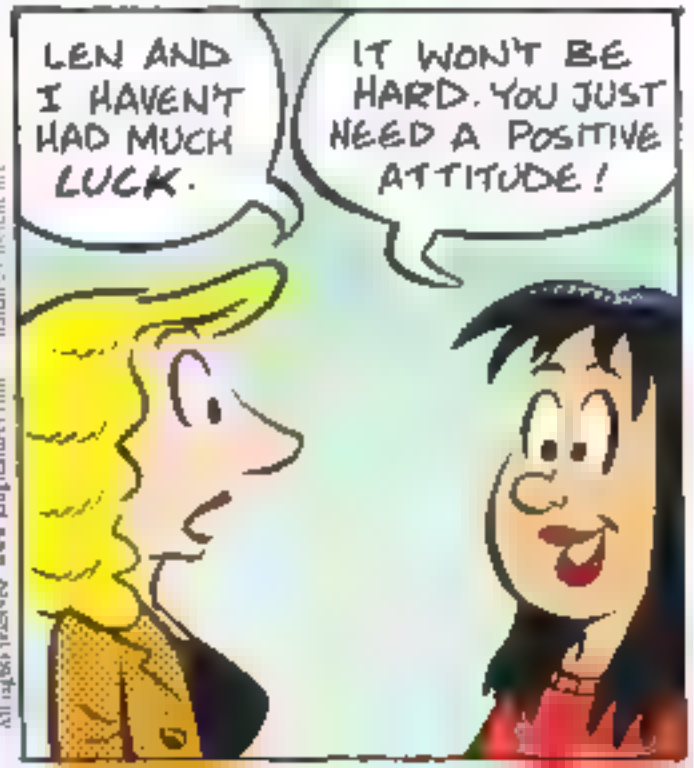

THE KIDS ARE DISAPPOINTED I DIDN'T SELL MORE STUFF AT WORK FOR THEIR SCHOOL FUND-RAISER.
I DIDN'T SELL MUCH EITHER.
I FEEL BAD. BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE TO HIT UP.
WE'RE STUCK, ABBY. WE'LL HAVE TO DO WHAT WE ALWAYS DO.
SO FAR WE'RE DOWN FOR 20 BOXES OF CANDY, 25 CANS OF MIXED NUTS AND 30 ROLLS OF GIFT WRAP.
OMIGOSH! LOOK AT ALL THE NUTS WE STILL HAVE FROM LAST YEAR!

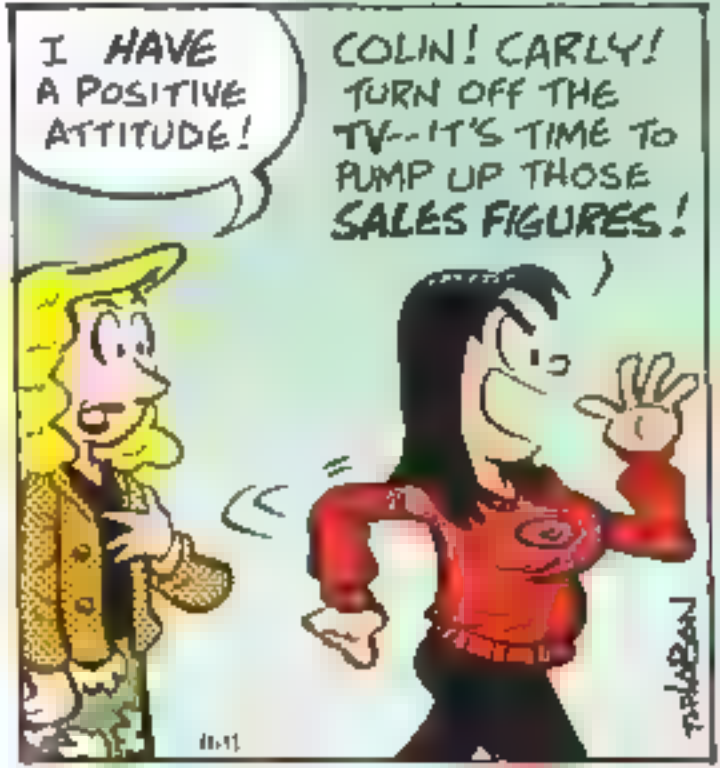

HI, ROCIO! HOW WERE THE KIDS TODAY?
FINE, SEÑORA ABBY. THEY SHOWED ME THE CATALOG FOR THEIR SCHOOL FUND-RAISER.
Special ITEMS

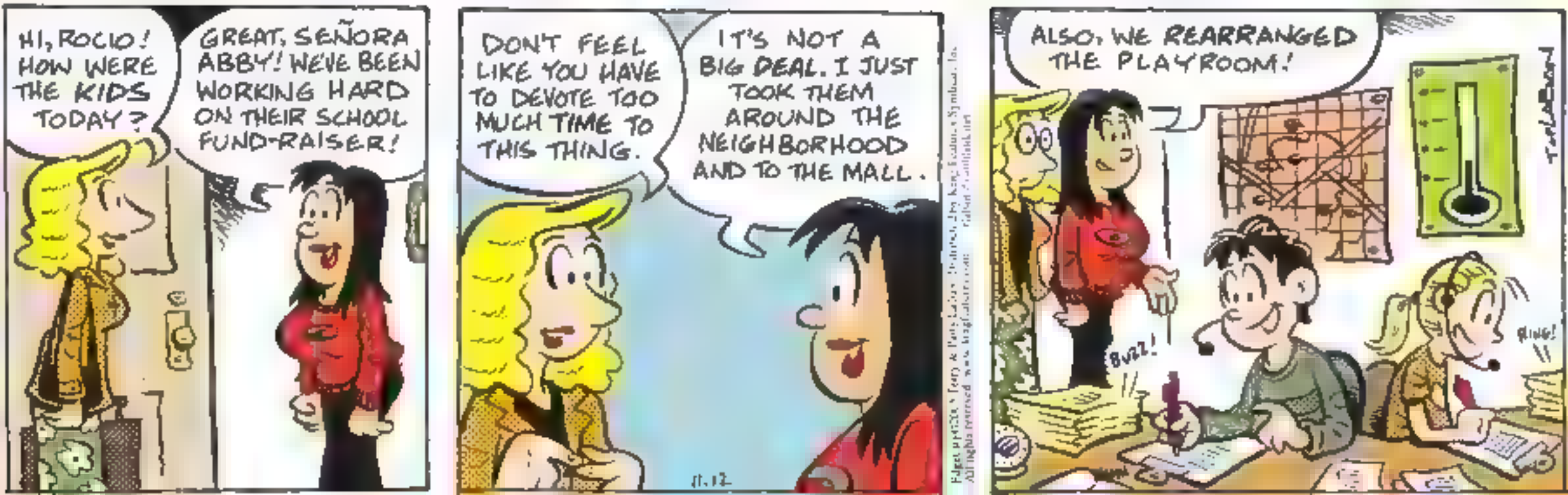
YEAH. UNFORTUNATELY, LEN AND I HAVEN'T SOLD VERY MUCH.
PEANUT BRITTLE... STATIONARY... GIFT WRAP... IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE!
Special ITEMS

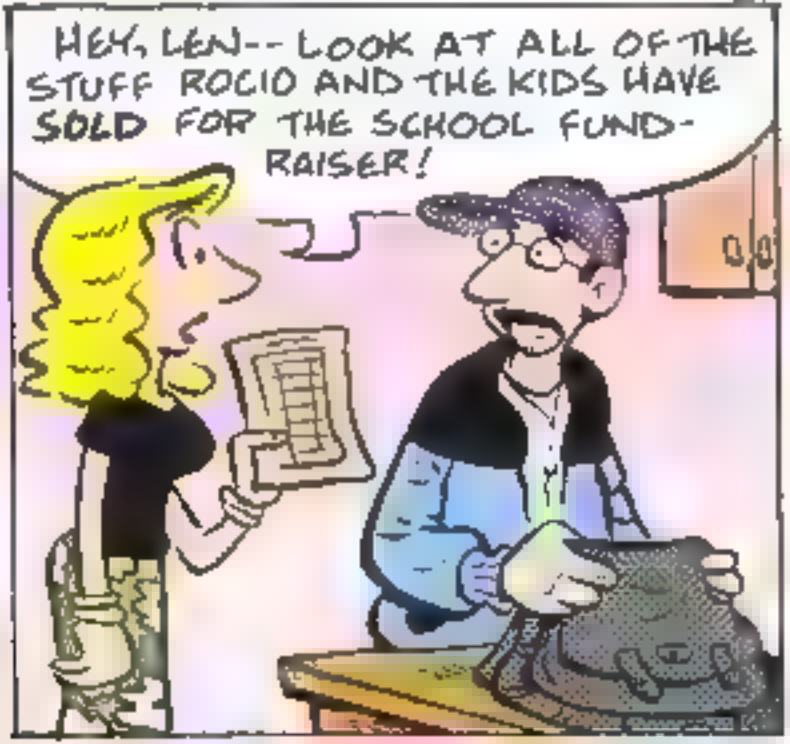

THAT THE SCHOOL EXPECTS TO MAKE MONEY WITH THAT STUFF?
NO--THAT YOU COULDN'T SELL IT! IT'S GREAT!
Special ITEMS
11.10

SEÑORA ABBY, IF THE KIDS NEED HELP WITH THEIR SCHOOL FUND-RAISER, I'D BE HAPPY TO DO IT!
IT'S FINE WITH ME, ROCIO--IF YOU THINK YOU CAN.
Special items

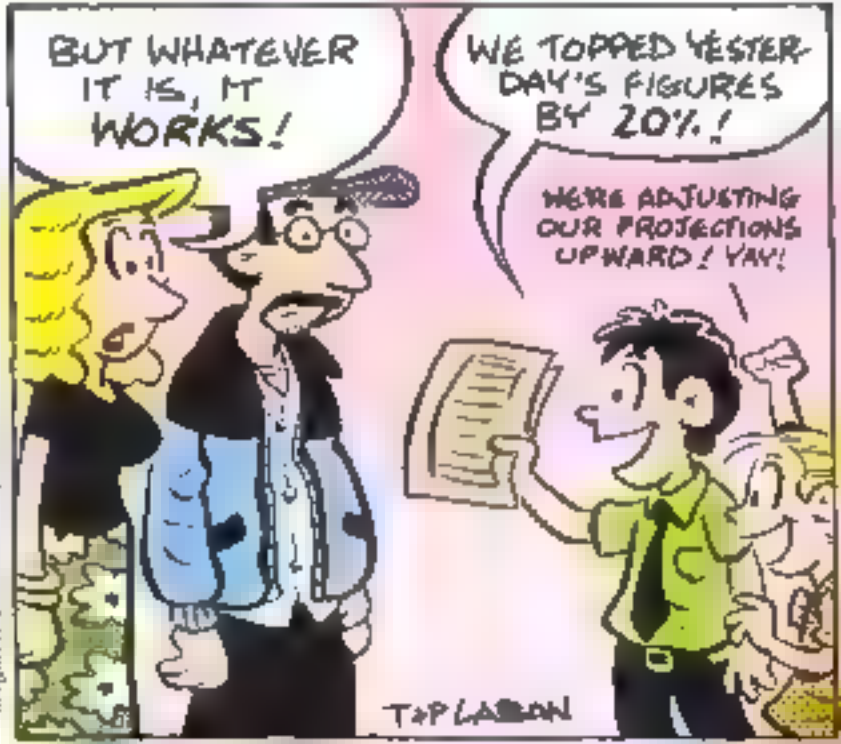

LEN AND I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH LUCK.
IT WON'T BE HARD. YOU JUST NEED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE!

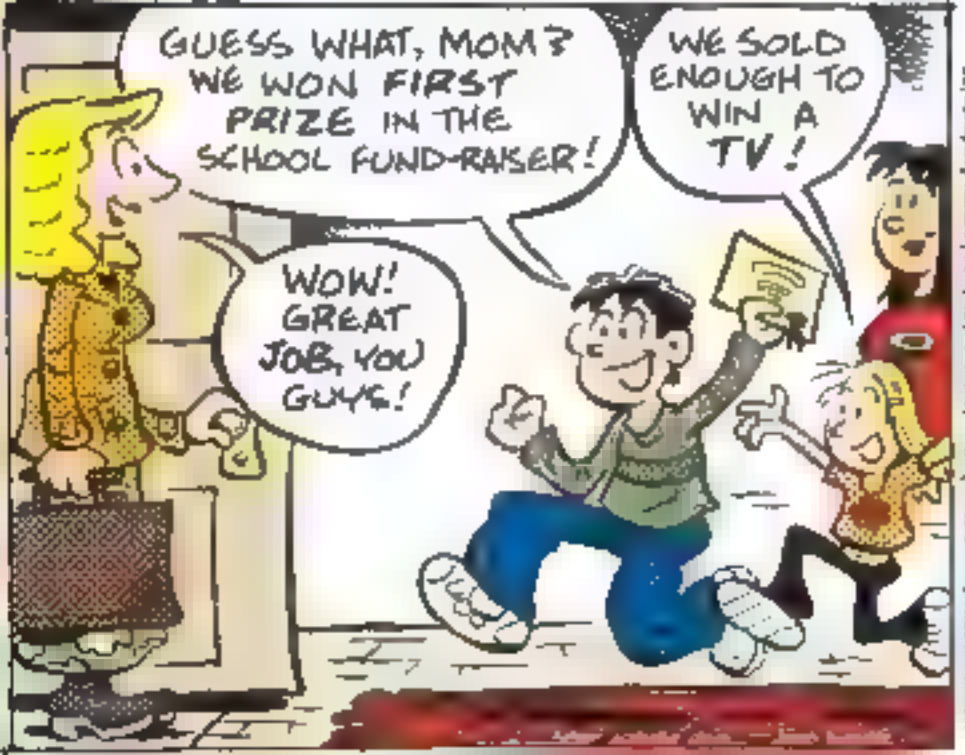

I HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE!
COLIN! CARLY! TURN OFF THE TV--IT'S TIME TO PUMP UP THOSE SALES FIGURES!


HI, ROCIO! HOW WERE THE KIDS TODAY?
GREAT, SEÑORA ABBY! WE'VE BEEN WORKING HARD ON THEIR SCHOOL FUND-RAISER!
DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO DEVOTE TOO MUCH TIME TO THIS THING.
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL. I JUST TOOK THEM AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND TO THE MALL.
ALSO, WE REARRANGED THE PLAYROOM!
BUZZ!
RING!

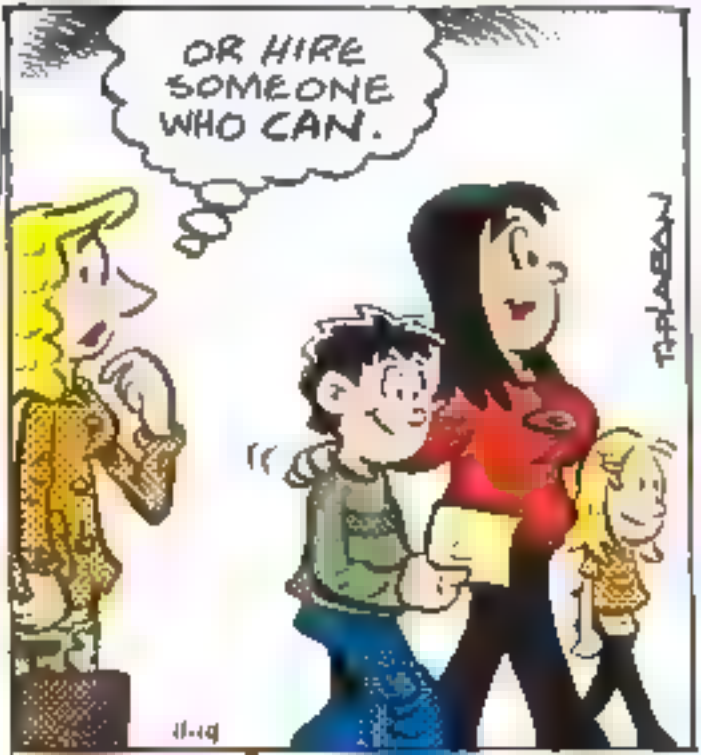

HEY, LEN--LOOK AT ALL OF THE STUFF ROCIO AND THE KIDS HAVE SOLD FOR THE SCHOOL FUND-RAISER!

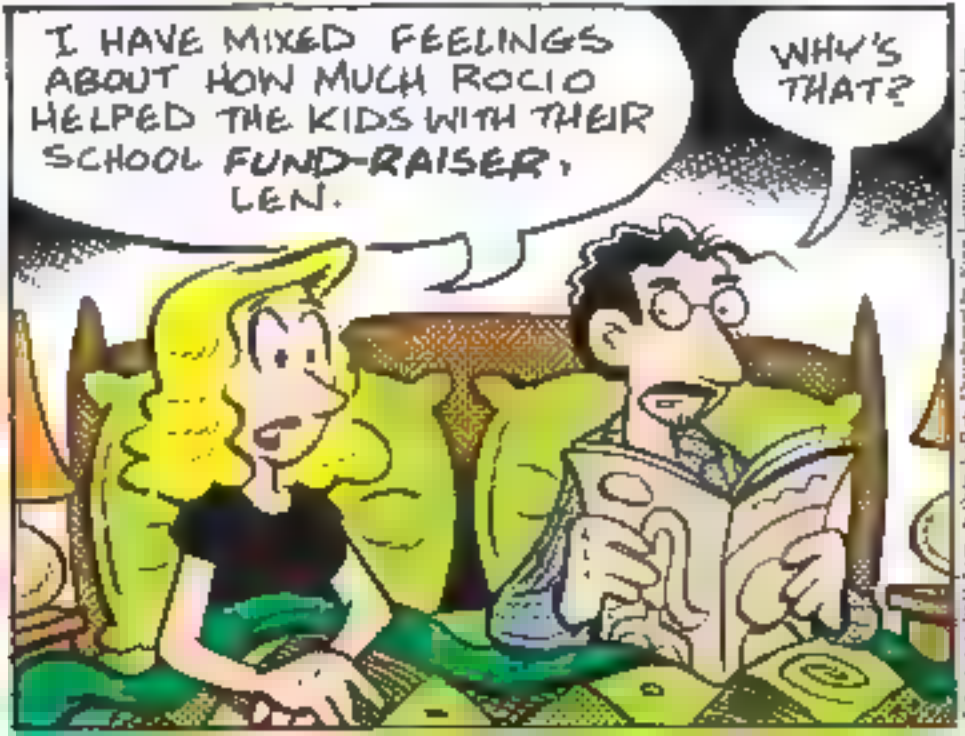
WOW--SHE'S QUITE A BABY SITTER! HOW IS SHE GETTING THEM SO MOTIVATED?
I DON'T KNOW...
ORDER FORM
11-13


BUT WHATEVER IT IS, IT WORKS!
WE TOPPED YESTERDAY'S FIGURES BY 20%!
WE'RE ADJUSTING OUR PROJECTIONS UPWARD! YAY!
TOP LABBON


GUESS WHAT, MOM? WE WON FIRST PRIZE IN THE SCHOOL FUND-RAISER!
WE SOLD ENOUGH TO WIN A TV!
WOW! GREAT JOB, YOU GUYS!

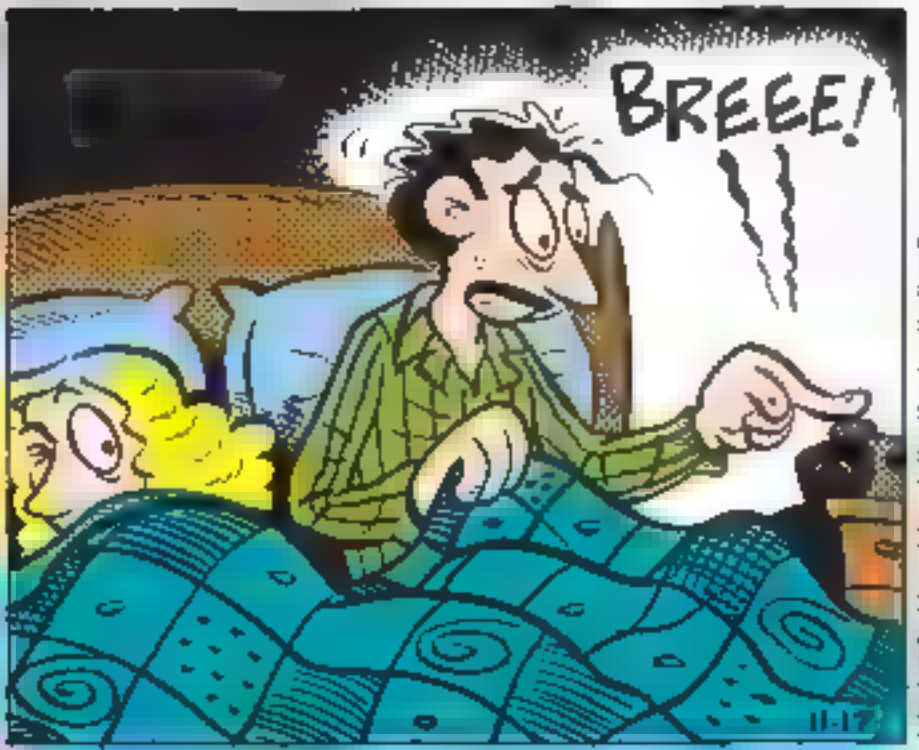
YOU'RE AN AMAZING BABY SITTER, ROCIO! HOW DID YOU GET THE KIDS SO MOTIVATED?
IT'S NOT HARD, SEÑORA ABBY. YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE THE TIME TO WORK WITH THEM!
FIRST PLACE

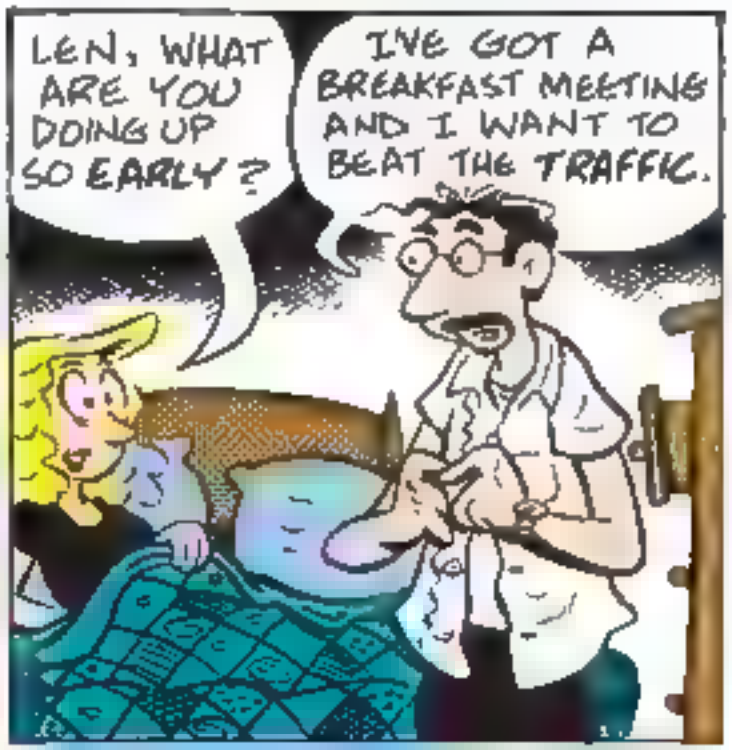

OR HIRE SOMEONE WHO CAN.

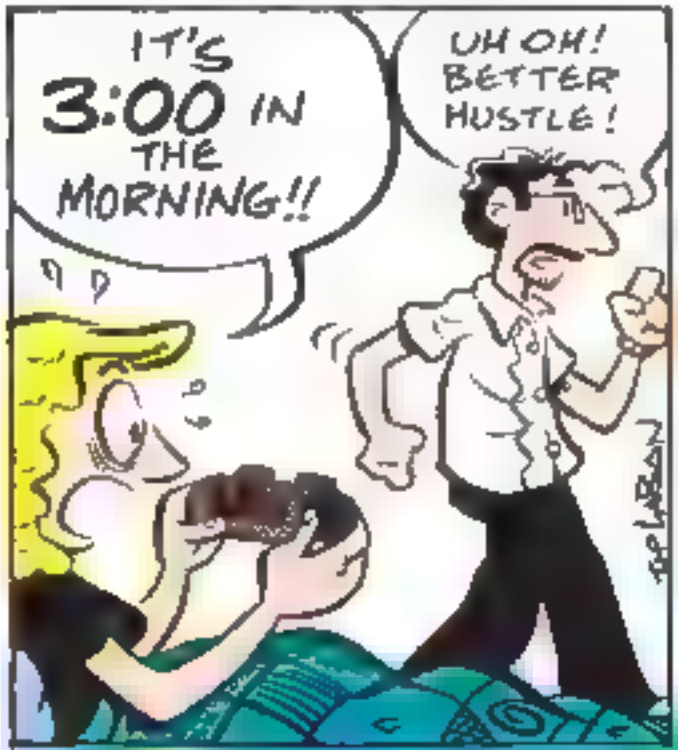

I HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT HOW MUCH ROCIO HELPED THE KIDS WITH THEIR SCHOOL FUND-RAISER, LEN.
WHY'S THAT?

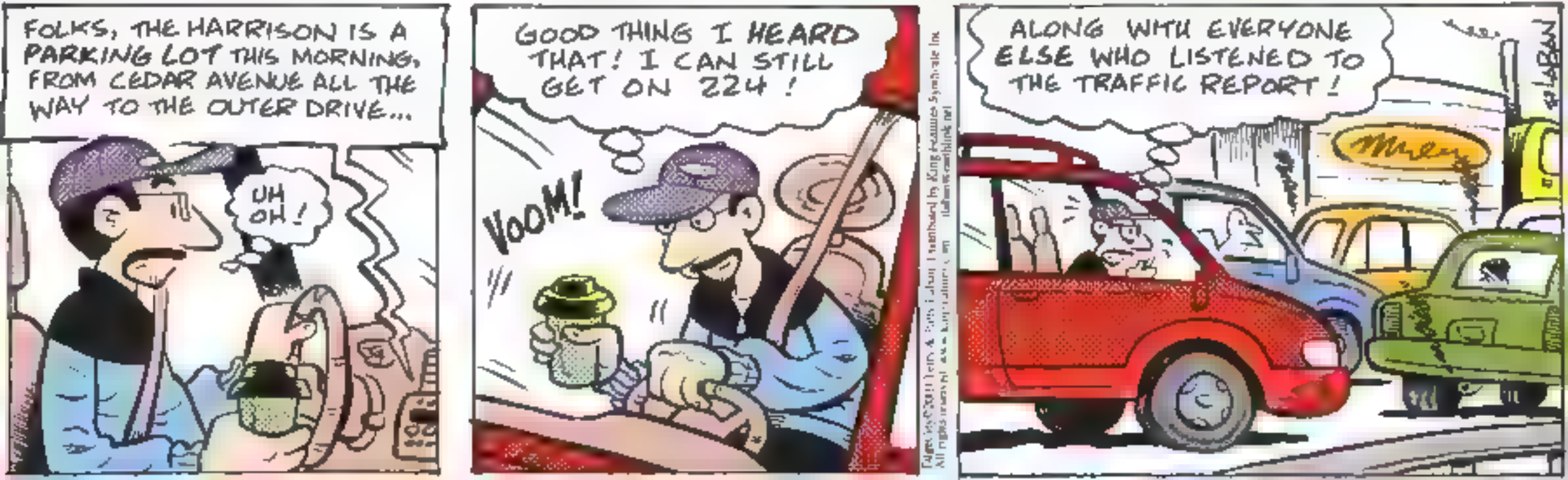
IT JUST SEEMS LIKE GOOD PARENTS WOULD'VE DONE IT THEMSELVES INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT TO A BABY SITTER.
C'MON, ABBY-- ROCIO DID A BETTER JOB THAN WE EVER COULD HAVE!
11-15

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO REASSURE ME, IT ISN'T WORKING.
THESE DAYS, A GOOD PARENT KNOWS HOW TO DELEGATE!


BREEE!
11-17


LEN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP SO EARLY?
I'VE GOT A BREAKFAST MEETING AND I WANT TO BEAT THE TRAFFIC.

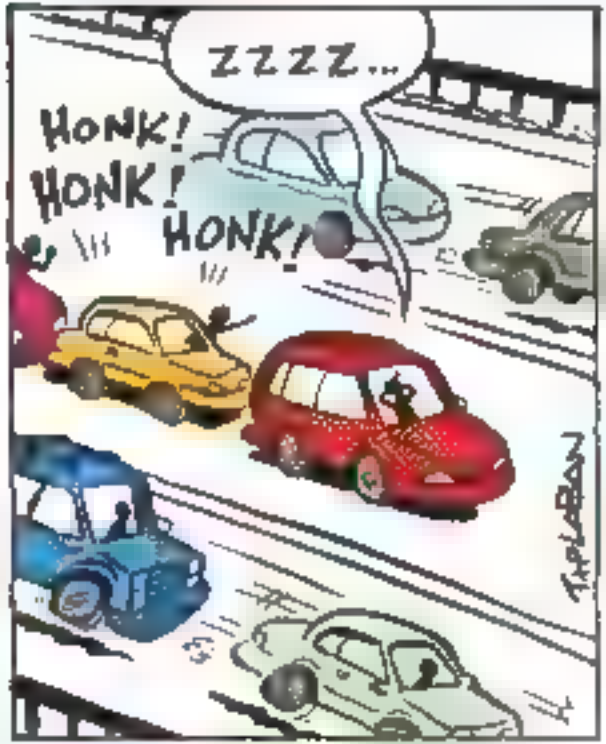

IT'S 3:00 IN THE MORNING!!
UH OH! BETTER HUSTLE!
GARY LARSON

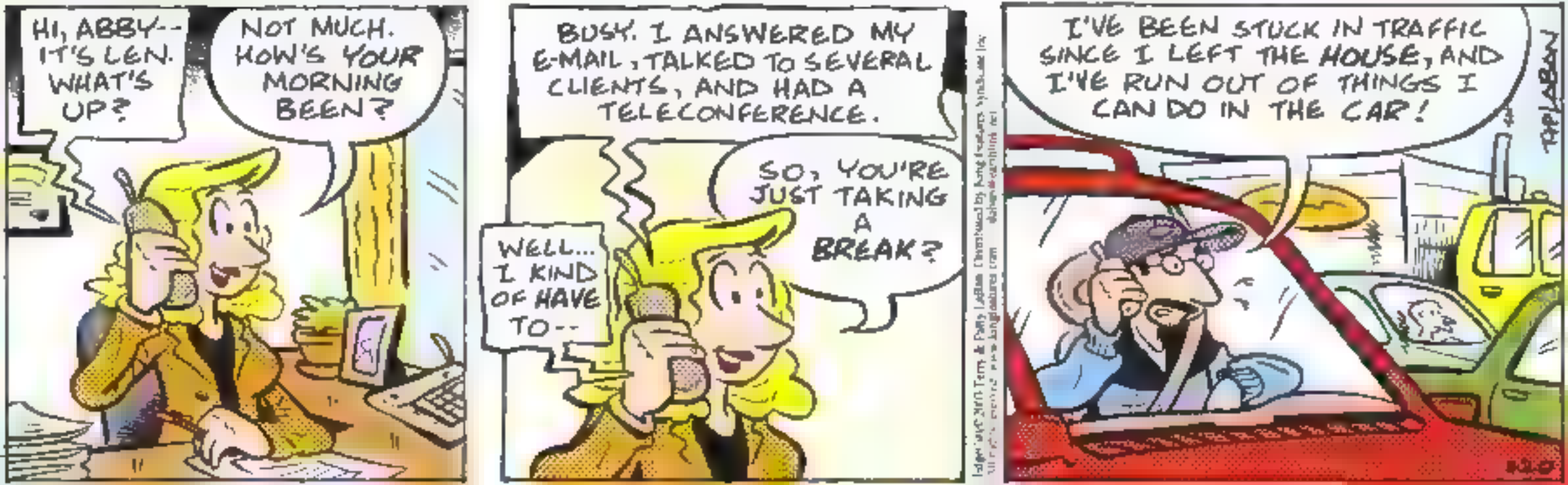

FOLKS, THE HARRISON IS A PARKING LOT THIS MORNING, FROM CEDAR AVENUE ALL THE WAY TO THE OUTER DRIVE...
UH OH!
GOOD THING I HEARD THAT! I CAN STILL GET ON 224!
VOOM!
ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE WHO LISTENED TO THE TRAFFIC REPORT!

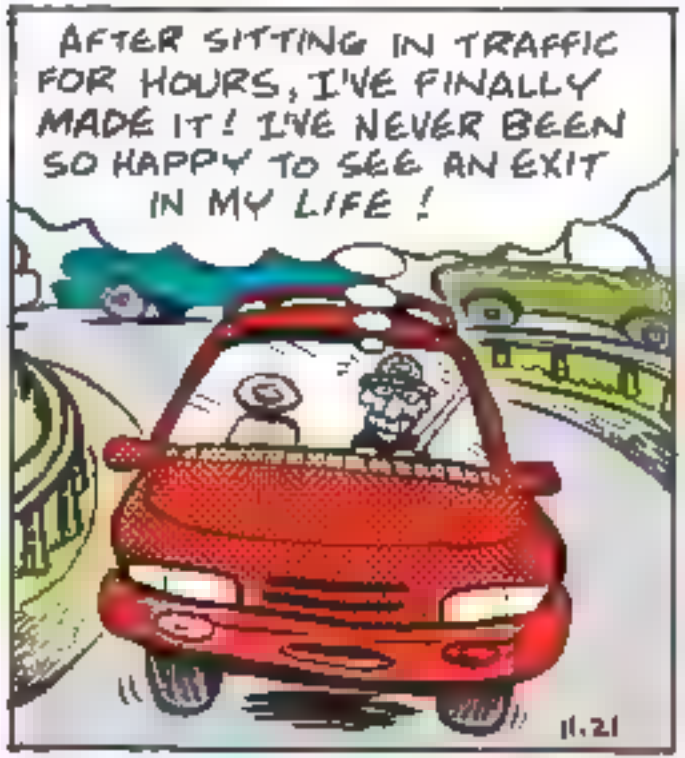
AGH! THE TRAFFIC IS TERRIBLE TODAY!
COME ON! MOVE IT!!
HONK!

:SIGH!: IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD TO GET UPSET. I SHOULD JUST PUT ON SOME TUNES AND RELAX!

♪ ♫ ♪...


ZZZZ...
HONK! HONK! HONK!


HI, ABBY-- IT'S LEN. WHAT'S UP?
NOT MUCH. HOW'S YOUR MORNING BEEN?
BUSY. I ANSWERED MY E-MAIL, TALKED TO SEVERAL CLIENTS, AND HAD A TELECONFERENCE.
SO, YOU'RE JUST TAKING A BREAK?
WELL... I KIND OF HAVE TO--
I'VE BEEN STUCK IN TRAFFIC SINCE I LEFT THE HOUSE, AND I'VE RUN OUT OF THINGS I CAN DO IN THE CAR!



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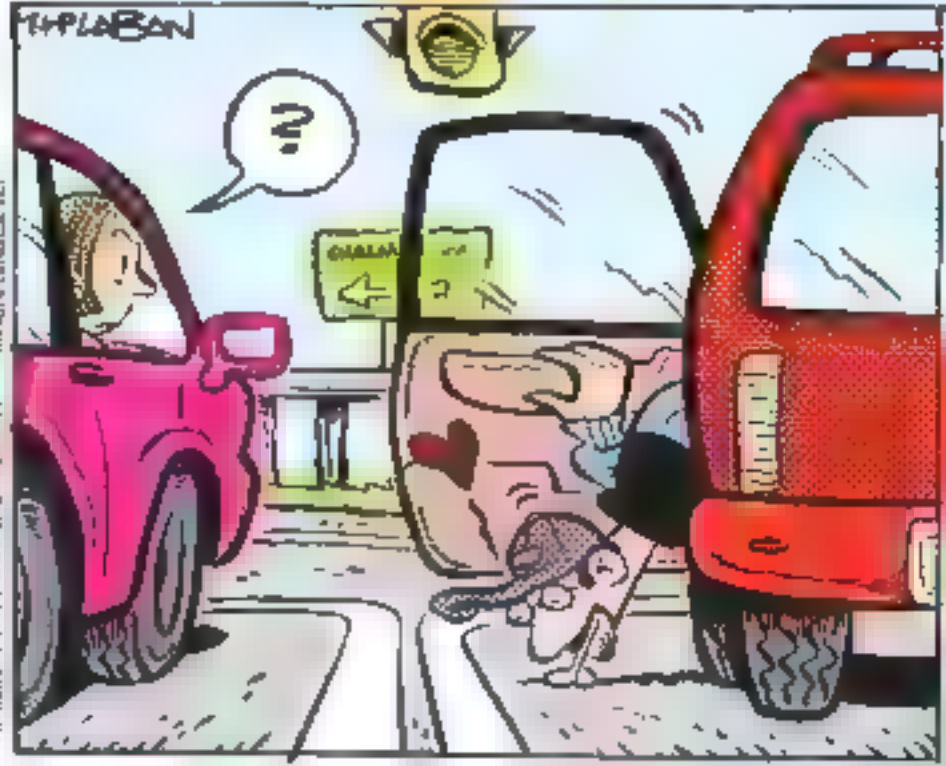
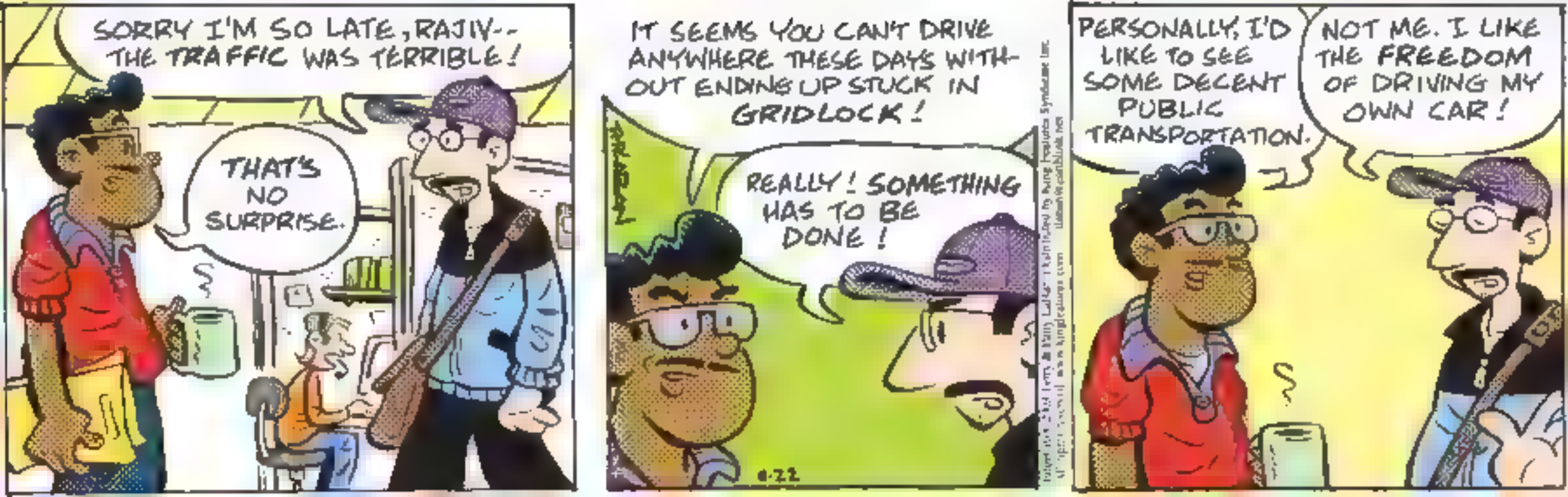
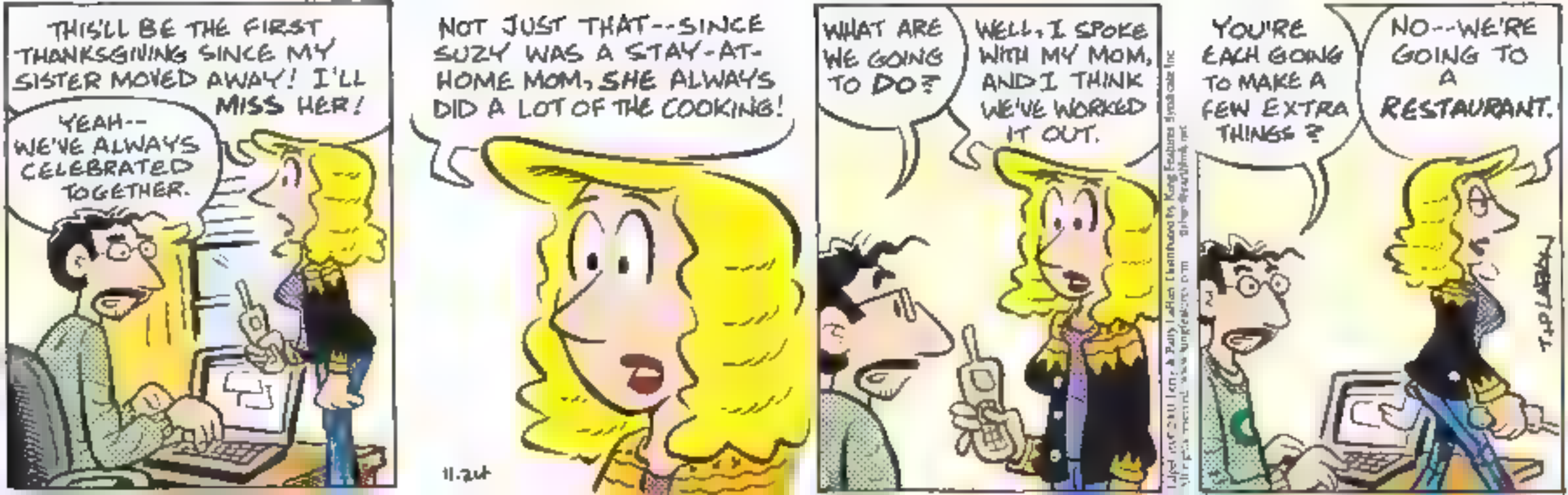
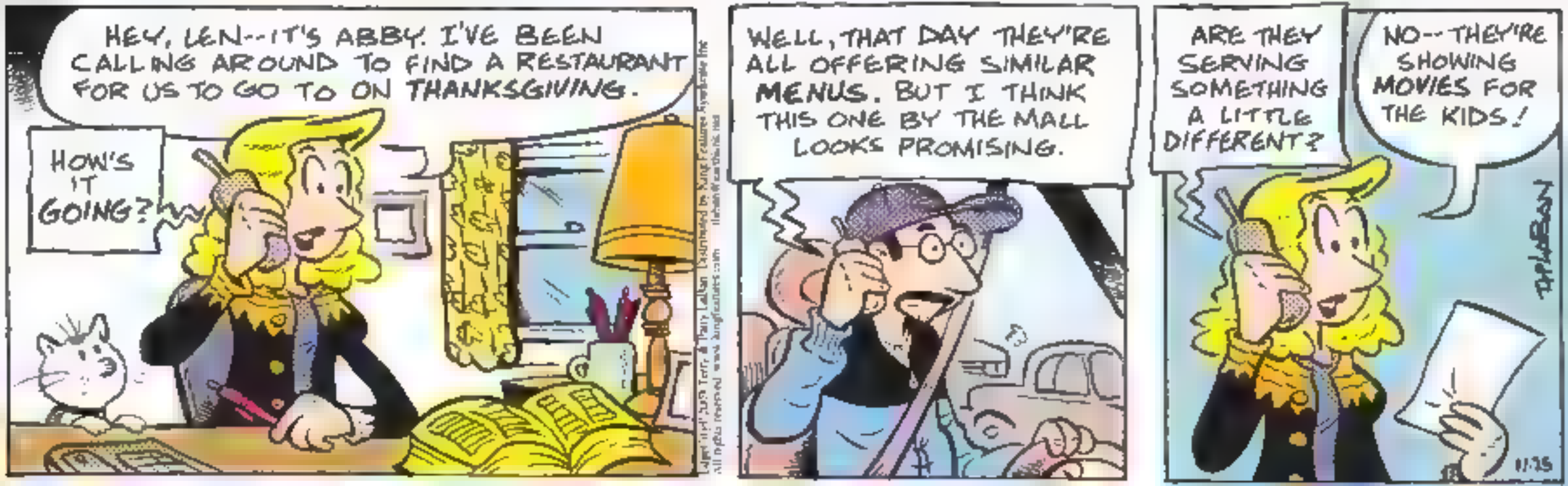
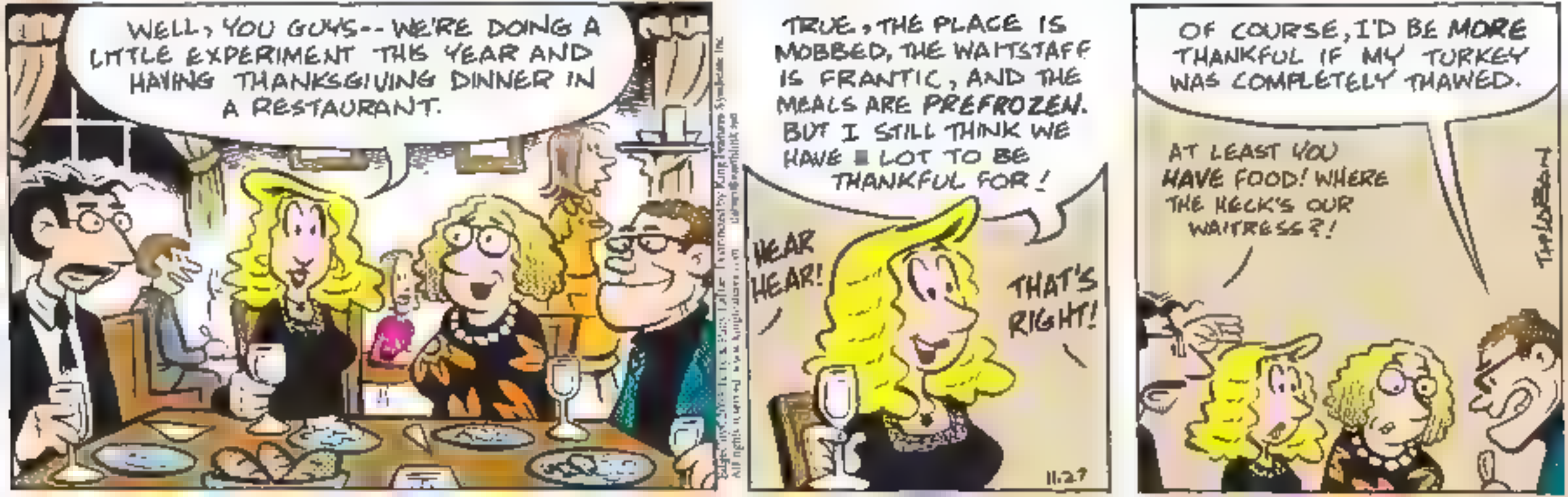


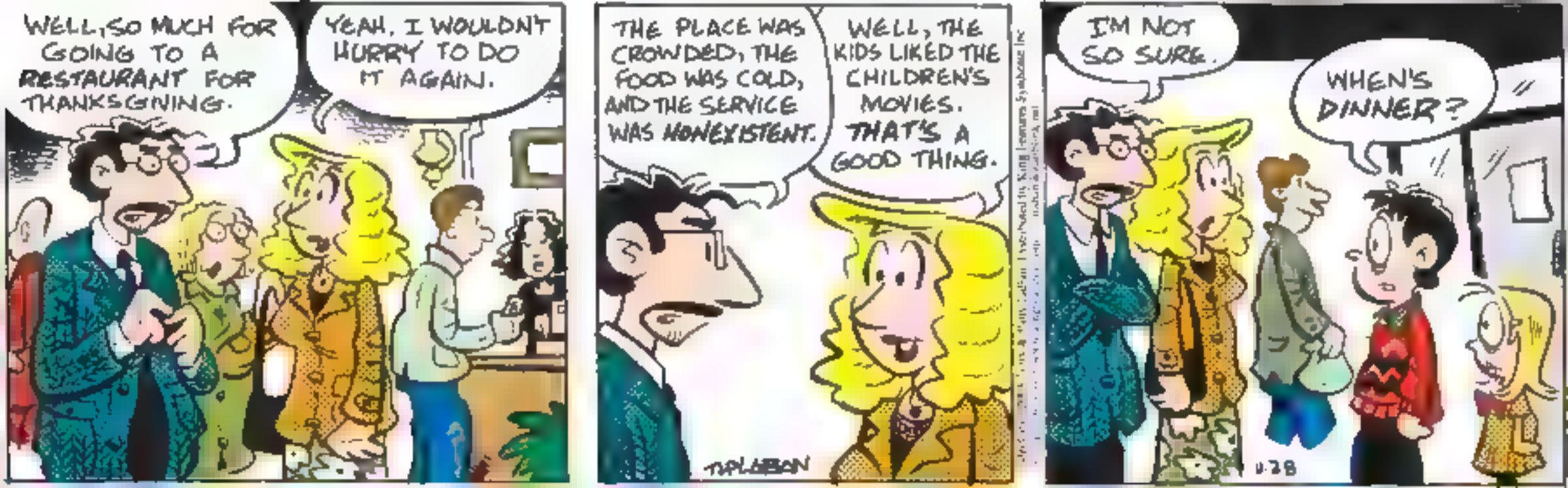

SORRY I'M SO LATE, RAJIV-- THE TRAFFIC WAS TERRIBLE!
THAT'S NO SURPRISE.
IT SEEMS YOU CAN'T DRIVE ANYWHERE THESE DAYS WITHOUT ENDING UP STUCK IN GRIDLOCK!
REALLY! SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE!
6-22
PERSONALLY, I'D LIKE TO SEE SOME DECENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.
NOT ME. I LIKE THE FREEDOM OF DRIVING MY OWN CAR!

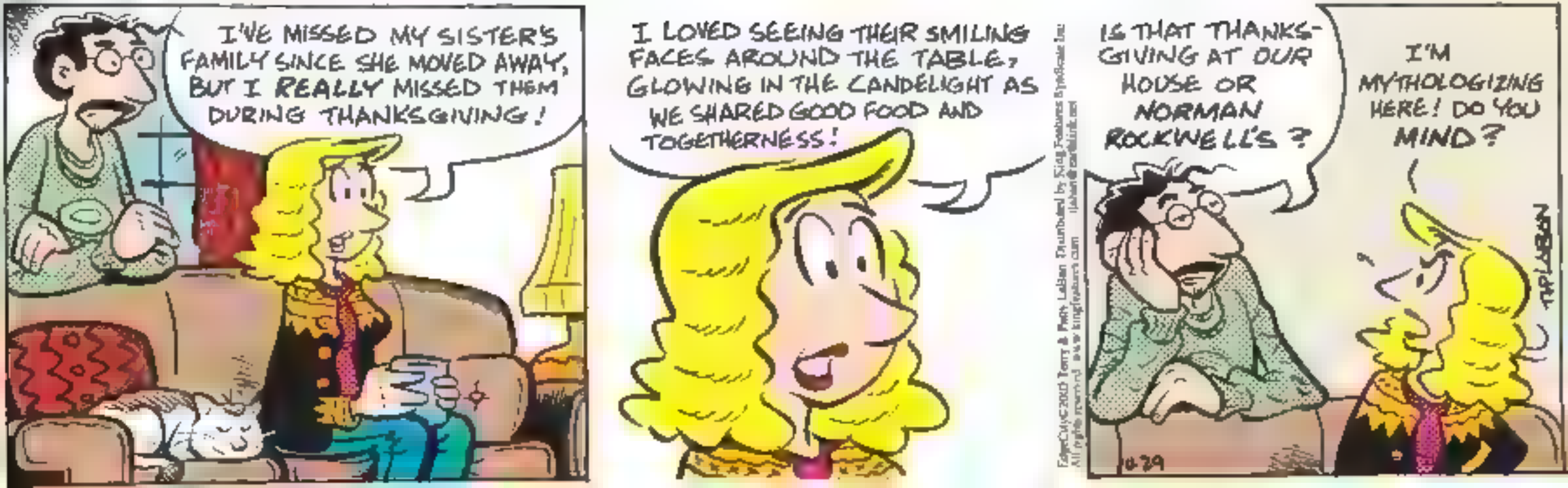

THIS'LL BE THE FIRST THANKSGIVING SINCE MY SISTER MOVED AWAY! I'LL MISS HER!
YEAH-- WE'VE ALWAYS CELEBRATED TOGETHER.
NOT JUST THAT--SINCE SUZY WAS A STAY-AT-HOME MOM, SHE ALWAYS DID A LOT OF THE COOKING!
11.24
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WELL, I SPOKE WITH MY MOM, AND I THINK WE'VE WORKED IT OUT.
YOU'RE EACH GOING TO MAKE A FEW EXTRA THINGS?
NO--WE'RE GOING TO A RESTAURANT.


HEY, LEN--IT'S ABBY. I'VE BEEN CALLING AROUND TO FIND A RESTAURANT FOR US TO GO TO ON THANKSGIVING.
HOW'S IT GOING?
WELL, THAT DAY THEY'RE ALL OFFERING SIMILAR MENUS. BUT I THINK THIS ONE BY THE MALL LOOKS PROMISING.
ARE THEY SERVING SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT?
NO--THEY'RE SHOWING MOVIES FOR THE KIDS!
TRUDEAU
11/25

HOPE THIS IS GOOD, MOM!
ACTUALLY, ABBY, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING THANKSGIVING DINNER IN A RESTAURANT.
IT'LL BE NICE FOR ONCE TO JUST RELAX AND LET SOMEONE ELSE DO ALL THE WORK!
11-26
AT LEAST, YOU'D THINK SO!
RESERVATION FOR 6? RIGHT THIS WAY...


WELL, YOU GUYS-- WE'RE DOING A LITTLE EXPERIMENT THIS YEAR AND HAVING THANKSGIVING DINNER IN A RESTAURANT.
TRUE, THE PLACE IS MOBBED, THE WAITSTAFF IS FRANTIC, AND THE MEALS ARE PREFROZEN. BUT I STILL THINK WE HAVE A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR!
HEAR HEAR!
THAT'S RIGHT!
11.27
OF COURSE, I'D BE MORE THANKFUL IF MY TURKEY WAS COMPLETELY THAWED.
AT LEAST YOU HAVE FOOD! WHERE THE HECK'S OUR WAITRESS?!


WELL, SO MUCH FOR GOING TO A RESTAURANT FOR THANKSGIVING.
YEAH. I WOULDN'T HURRY TO DO IT AGAIN.
THE PLACE WAS CROWDED, THE FOOD WAS COLD, AND THE SERVICE WAS NONEXISTENT.
WELL, THE KIDS LIKED THE CHILDREN'S MOVIES. THAT'S A GOOD THING.
I'M NOT SO SURE.
WHEN'S DINNER?


I'VE MISSED MY SISTER'S FAMILY SINCE SHE MOVED AWAY, BUT I REALLY MISSED THEM DURING THANKSGIVING!
I LOVED SEEING THEIR SMILING FACES AROUND THE TABLE, GLOWING IN THE CANDLELIGHT AS WE SHARED GOOD FOOD AND TOGETHERNESS!
IS THAT THANKSGIVING AT OUR HOUSE OR NORMAN ROCKWELL'S?
I'M MYTHOLOGIZING HERE! DO YOU MIND?
NORTHAM
11-29

HI, GEORGE!
SORRY I'M LATE, YOU GUYS. I WAS ON THE PHONE WITH MY BROTHER.
MIDLIFE CRISIS
12.1
HE OWNS A SMALL BUSINESS, AND HE WANTS US TO PLAY AT THEIR HOLIDAY PARTY!
REALLY?
DOES HE LIKE WHAT WE USUALLY PLAY?
NO--BUT I TOLD HIM WHAT WE USUALLY CHARGE!
TOPLABAN

YOUR BROTHER WANTS US TO PLAY AT HIS COMPANY'S HOLIDAY PARTY?

YEAH. HE GAVE ME A LIST OF SONGS HE WANTS TO HEAR.

MIDLIFE CRISIS

12.2

"RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER"? "CELEBRATE"? "JINGLE BELL ROCK"? GEORGE, WE'RE A HARD ROCK BAND!

REALLY! WE CAN'T DO THIS STUFF!

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HE OFFERED TO PAY US $1500!

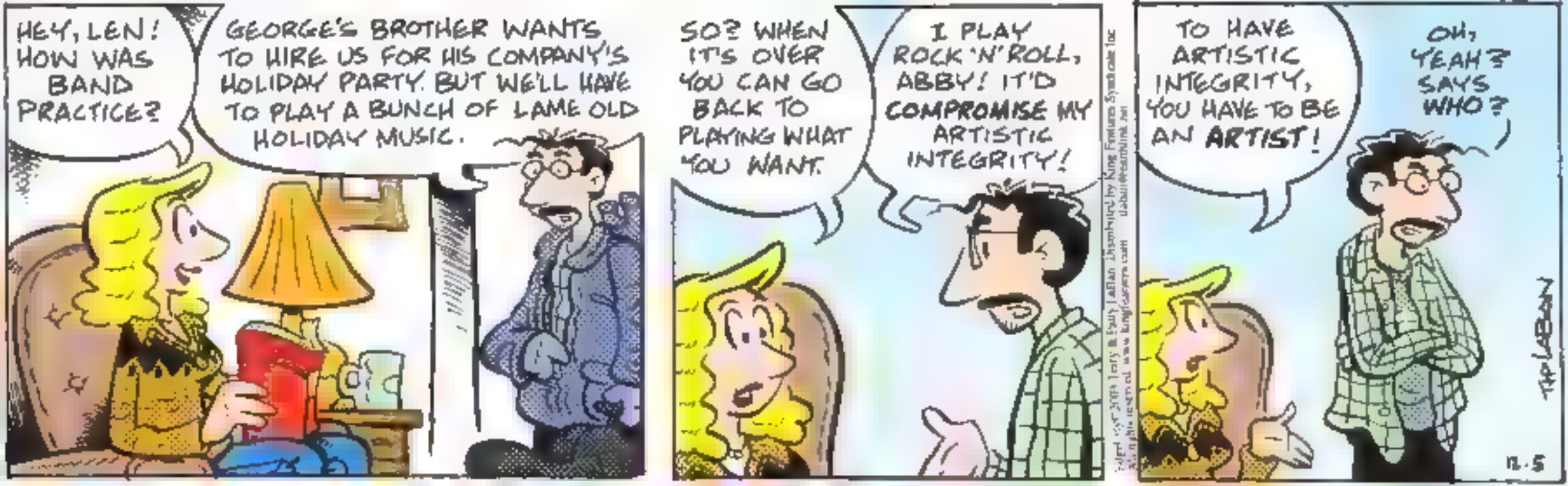
OH. THEN LET'S GO FOR IT!

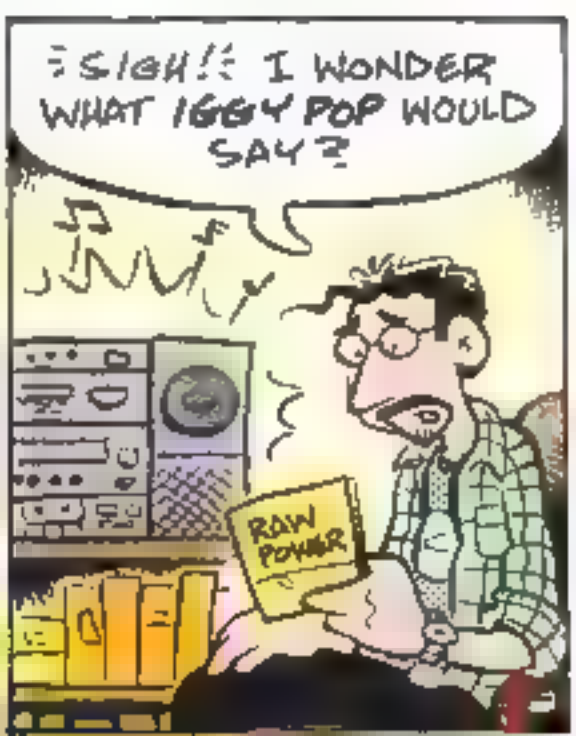
ACTUALLY, I LIKE "JINGLE BELL ROCK"!

TIM LARSON

LOOK, YOU GUYS--I DON'T WANT TO PLAY CORNY OLD CHRISTMAS SONGS AT A COMPANY'S HOLIDAY PARTY!
MIDLIFE CRISIS
BUT LEN! THEY'RE GONNA PAY US $1500!
SO WHAT? I ALREADY HAVE A JOB!
I'M NOT PLAYING IN THIS BAND TO MAKE A PROFIT! I'M DOING IT TO HAVE FUN!
12-3
I THINK MAKING $1500 IS FUN.
YEAH! FUN AND PROFIT GO TOGETHER, IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD!
TRUDEAU

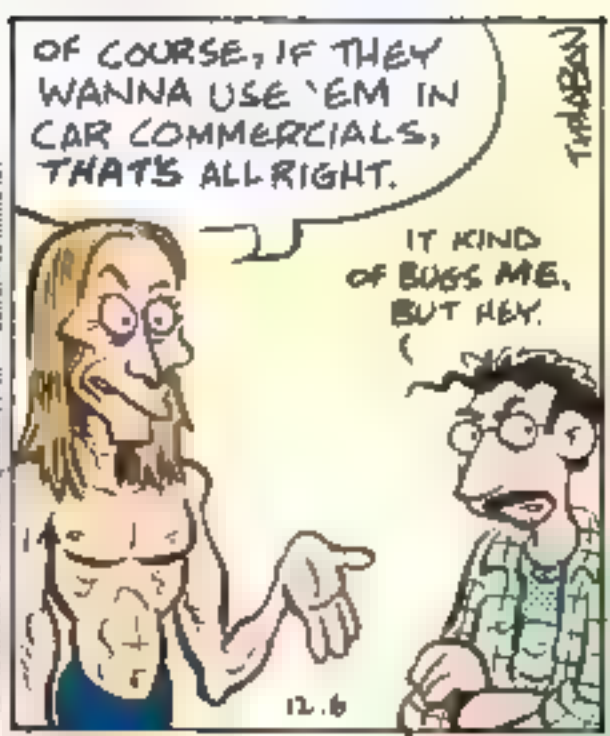
SISH!! OK, LET'S TRY IT...
♫ "RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER"...♪
MIDL CRIS
STOP! STOP! LOOK, I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH GEORGE'S BROTHER IS PAYING US! I PLAY ROCK 'N' ROLL!
IF YOU GUYS WANNA PLAY CORNY OLD SONGS AT A HOLIDAY PARTY, FINE! BUT YOU CAN DO IT WITHOUT ME!!
TAPLABAN
THAT'S COOL!
YEAH! I'LL SING, AND WE CAN SPLIT THE MONEY 3 WAYS!
WAIT! AREN'T WE AT LEAST GONNA TALK?!
12.14

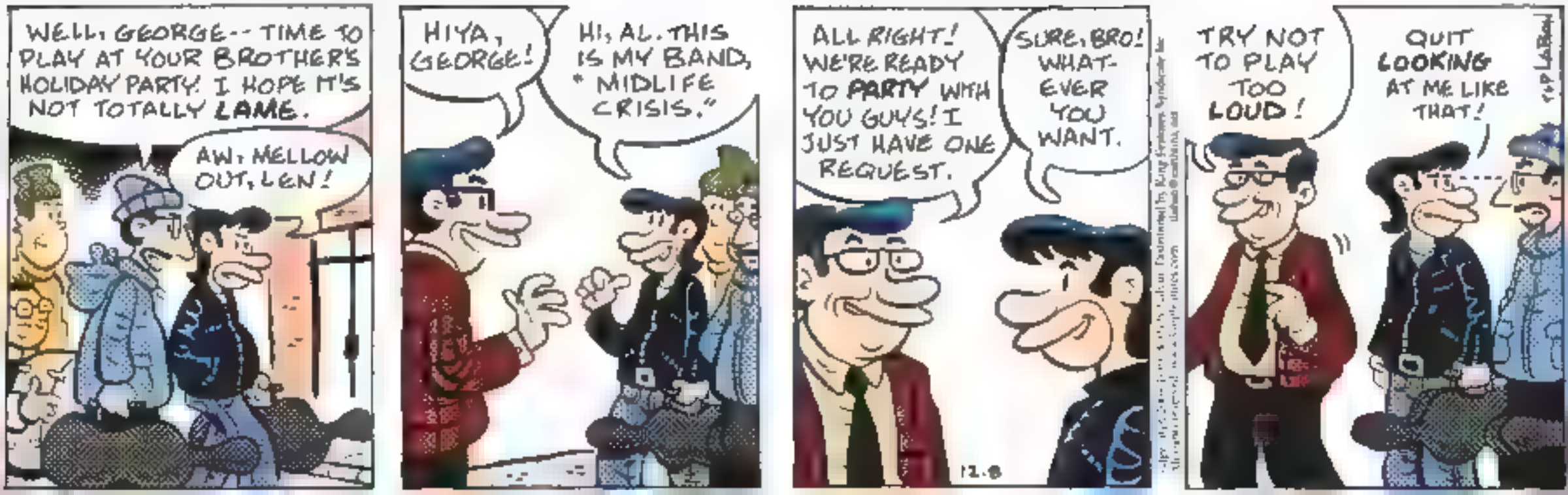

HEY, LEN! HOW WAS BAND PRACTICE?
GEORGE'S BROTHER WANTS TO HIRE US FOR HIS COMPANY'S HOLIDAY PARTY. BUT WE'LL HAVE TO PLAY A BUNCH OF LAME OLD HOLIDAY MUSIC.
SO? WHEN IT'S OVER YOU CAN GO BACK TO PLAYING WHAT YOU WANT.
I PLAY ROCK 'N' ROLL, ABBY! IT'D COMPROMISE MY ARTISTIC INTEGRITY!
TO HAVE ARTISTIC INTEGRITY, YOU HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST!
OH, YEAH? SAYS WHO?
TIM LABAN
12-5

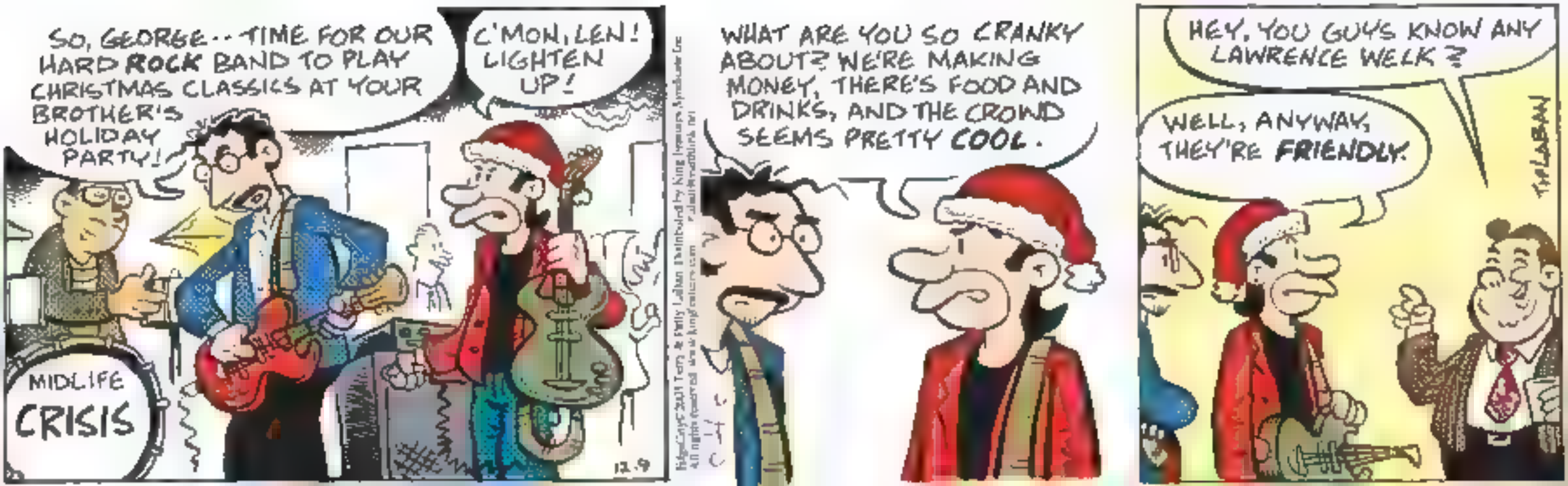

SIGH!! I WONDER WHAT IGGY POP WOULD SAY?
RAW POWER

'SMATTER, MAN?
A GUY WANTS TO HIRE MY BAND FOR A HOLIDAY PARTY— BUT ONLY IF WE AGREE TO PLAY MUSIC I HATE!

YOU HAVEN'T COMPROMISED IN OVER 30 YEARS! HOW DO YOU DO IT?
LISTEN, I PLAY MY SONGS, AND THAT'S IT! IF PEOPLE DON'T LIKE 'EM, THEN THEY CAN !


OF COURSE, IF THEY WANNA USE 'EM IN CAR COMMERCIALS, THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT KIND OF BUGS ME, BUT HEY.
12.6


WELL, GEORGE-- TIME TO PLAY AT YOUR BROTHER'S HOLIDAY PARTY. I HOPE IT'S NOT TOTALLY LAME.
AW, MELLOW OUT, LEN!
HIYA, GEORGE!
HI, AL. THIS IS MY BAND, "MIDLIFE CRISIS."
ALL RIGHT! WE'RE READY TO PARTY WITH YOU GUYS! I JUST HAVE ONE REQUEST.
SURE, BRO! WHATEVER YOU WANT.
TRY NOT TO PLAY TOO LOUD!
QUIT LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!


SO, GEORGE... TIME FOR OUR HARD ROCK BAND TO PLAY CHRISTMAS CLASSICS AT YOUR BROTHER'S HOLIDAY PARTY!
C'MON, LEN! LIGHTEN UP!
MIDLIFE CRISIS
12-9
WHAT ARE YOU SO CRANKY ABOUT? WE'RE MAKING MONEY, THERE'S FOOD AND DRINKS, AND THE CROWD SEEMS PRETTY COOL.
HEY, YOU GUYS KNOW ANY LAWRENCE WELK?
WELL, ANYWAY, THEY'RE FRIENDLY.
TM LABAN

OK...YOU READY?
READY AS I'LL EVER BE.
12.10
WELCOME TO THE PLEXCORP HOLIDAY PARTY. WE'RE "MIDLIFE CRISIS," AND WE'VE BEEN ASKED TO START WITH A SONG CALLED...:SIGH:..." JINGLE BELL ROCK".
WOOHOO!
YEAH!
WHISTLE!
ALL RIGHT!
JINGLE BELL, JINGLE BELL, JINGLE BELL ROCK!!

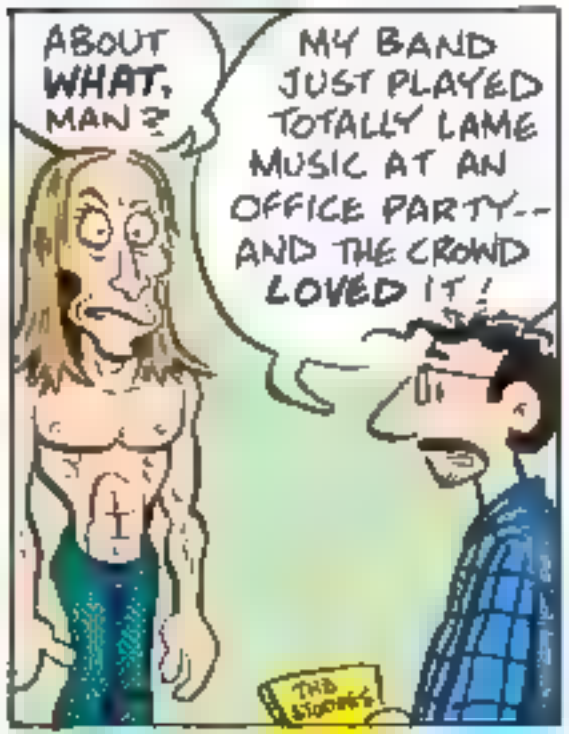
...IN A ONE-HORSE OOOPEN SLEEIGH!!
MIDLIFE CRISIS

DANG, LEN--FOR A GUY WHO DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY LAME HOLIDAY MUSIC, YOU SEEM TO BE HAVING A PRETTY GOOD TIME.
WELL, THE CROWD IS MORE ENTHUSIASTIC THAN I EXPECTED.
12.11

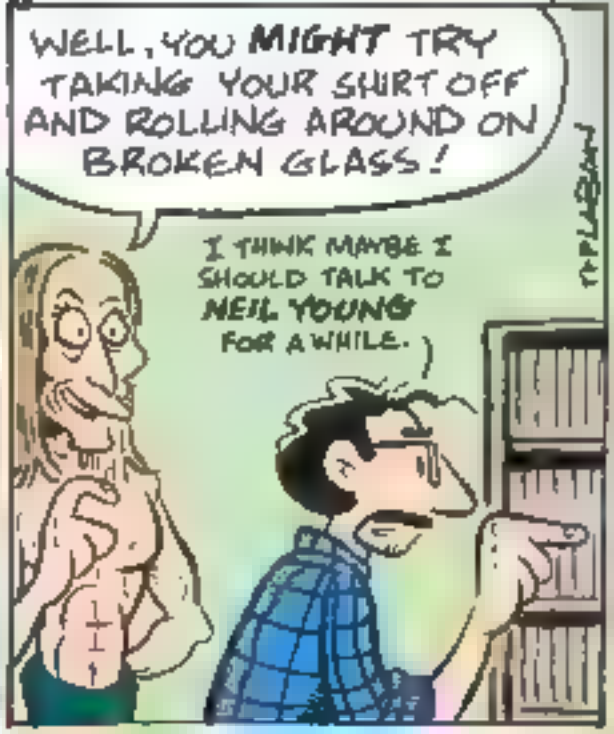
I'LL SAY! THEY FORMED A MOSH PIT DURING "RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER"!
PLAY "HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS"! WOO!
T+P LABAN

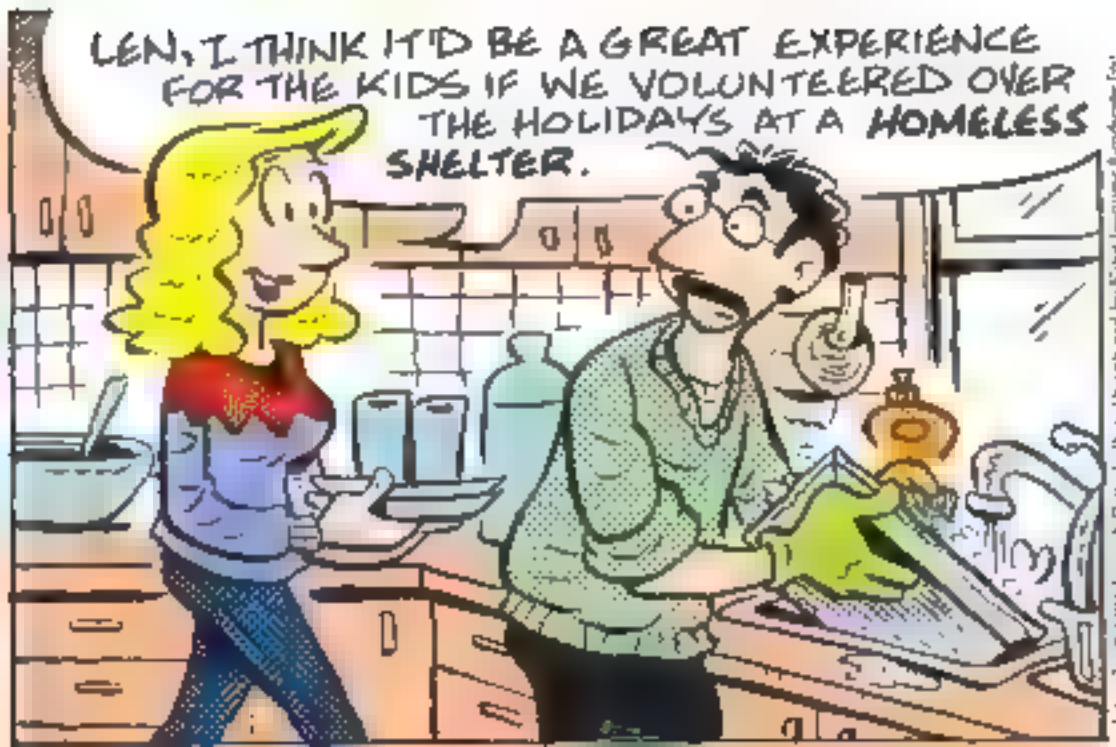
WE ATE, WE DRANK, WE PLAYED MUSIC AND MADE SOME CASH. I'D SAY MY BROTHER'S HOLIDAY PARTY WAS ALL RIGHT!
IT WAS OK.
OK? FOR A GUY WHO COMPLAINED ABOUT HAVING TO PLAY HOLIDAY SONGS INSTEAD OF ROCK 'N' ROLL, YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE HAVING A LOT OF FUN!
I WAS. I JUST HOPE IT'S SOMETHING WE DON'T DO TOO OFTEN.
DPLOBRON 12-12
I'D HATE FOR OUR BAND TO LOSE ITS IDENTITY.
HEY! WOULD YOU FELLAS WANT TO PLAY AT MY SON'S 5th BIRTHDAY PARTY?

SIGH!! I CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT IGGY POP WOULD SAY!
THE STOOGES


ABOUT WHAT, MAN?
MY BAND JUST PLAYED TOTALLY LAME MUSIC AT AN OFFICE PARTY-- AND THE CROWD LOVED IT!
THE STOOGES

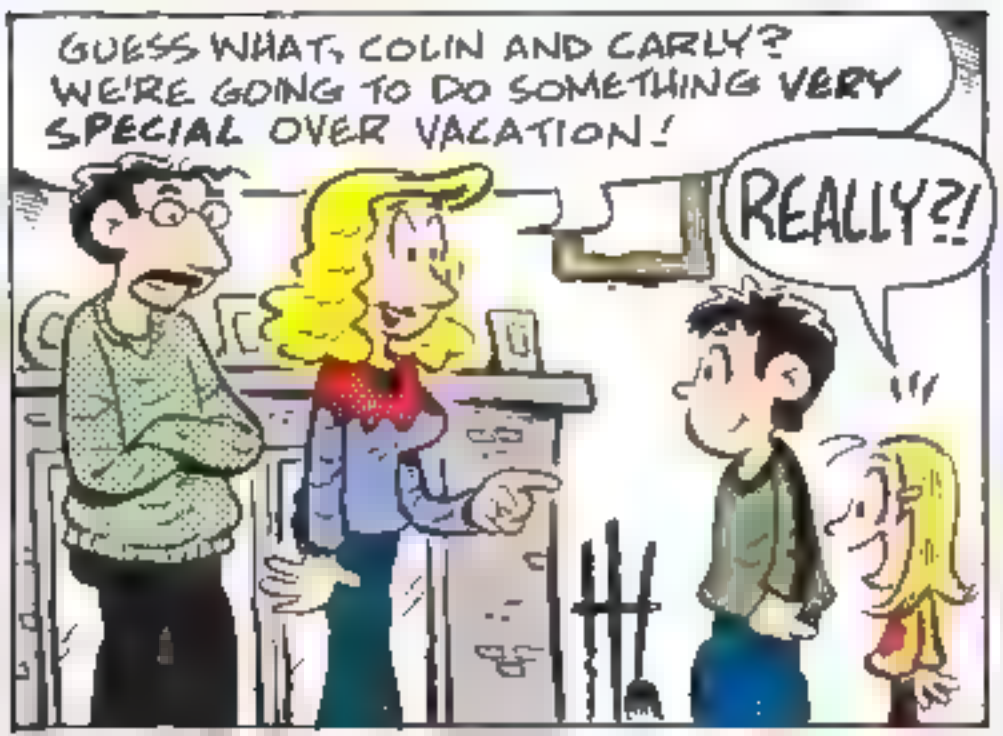
SO? WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
HOW CAN WE GET PEOPLE TO RESPOND THAT WAY WHEN WE PLAY THE KIND OF MUSIC WE LIKE?


WELL, YOU MIGHT TRY TAKING YOUR SHIRT OFF AND ROLLING AROUND ON BROKEN GLASS!
I THINK MAYBE I SHOULD TALK TO NEIL YOUNG FOR A WHILE.


LEN, I THINK IT'D BE A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR THE KIDS IF WE VOLUNTEERED OVER THE HOLIDAYS AT A HOMELESS SHELTER.

I AGREE, ABBY! IT'D BE GOOD FOR THEM TO LEARN THE VALUE OF TAKING TIME TO HELP OTHERS.
12.15

I CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR HOW IT GOES!
WHEN I SAID "WE," I MEANT YOU TOO, LEN!



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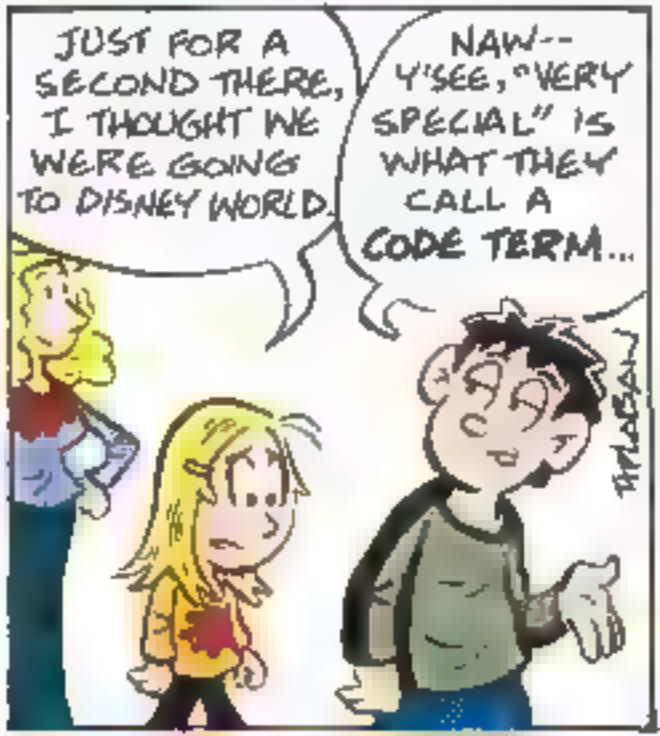
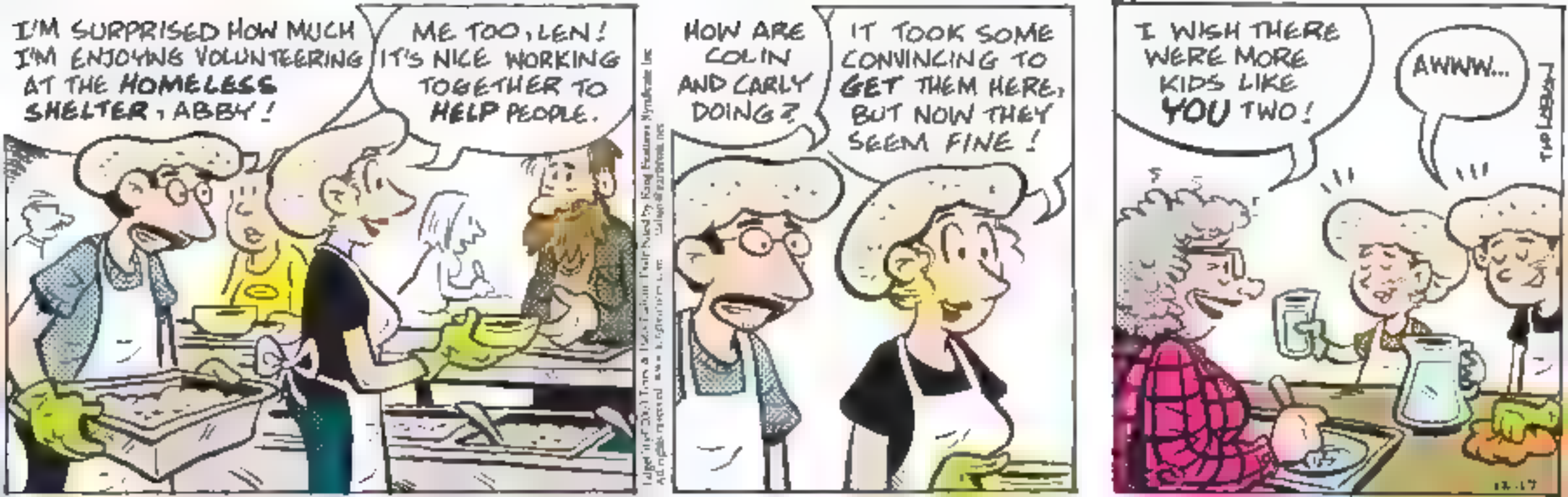
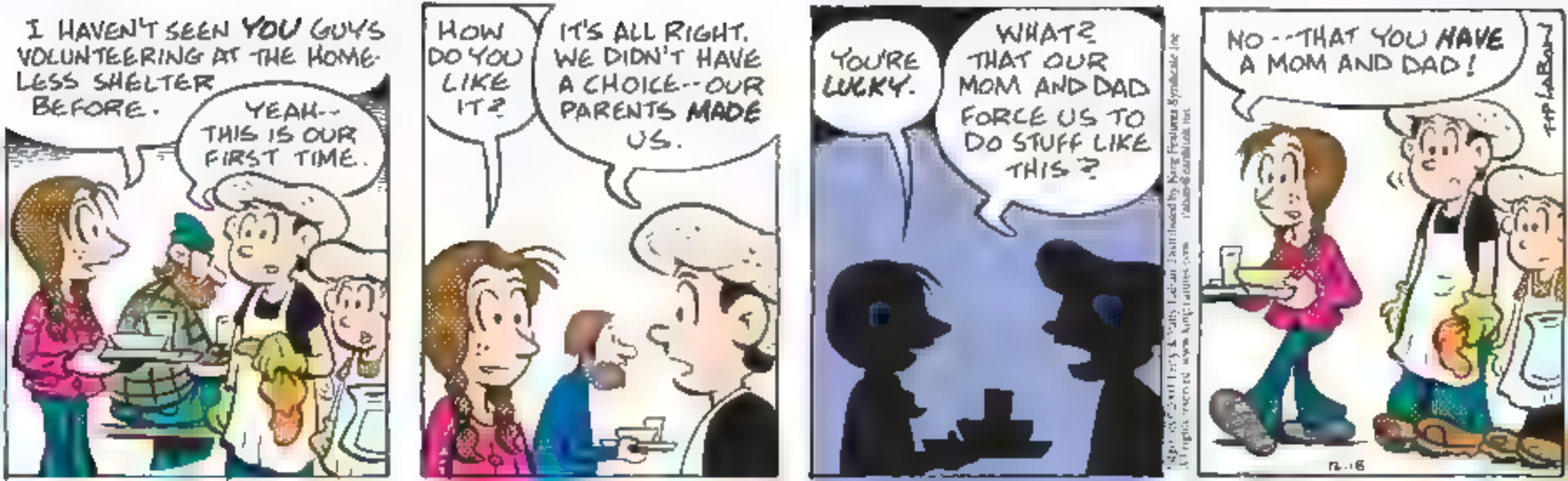
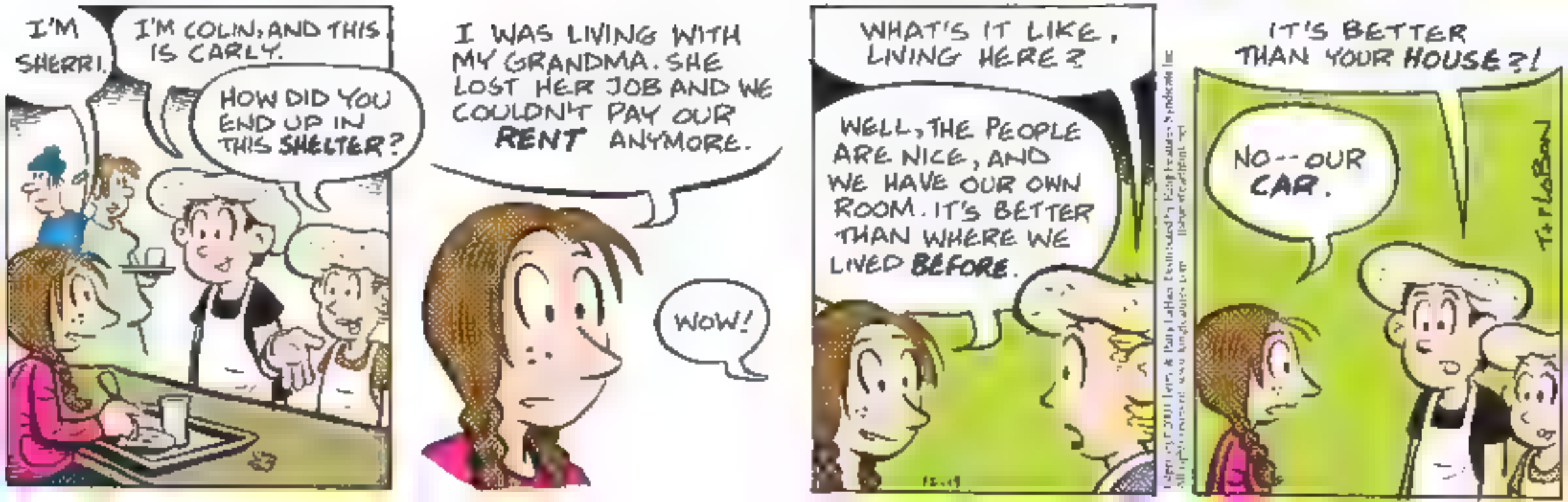
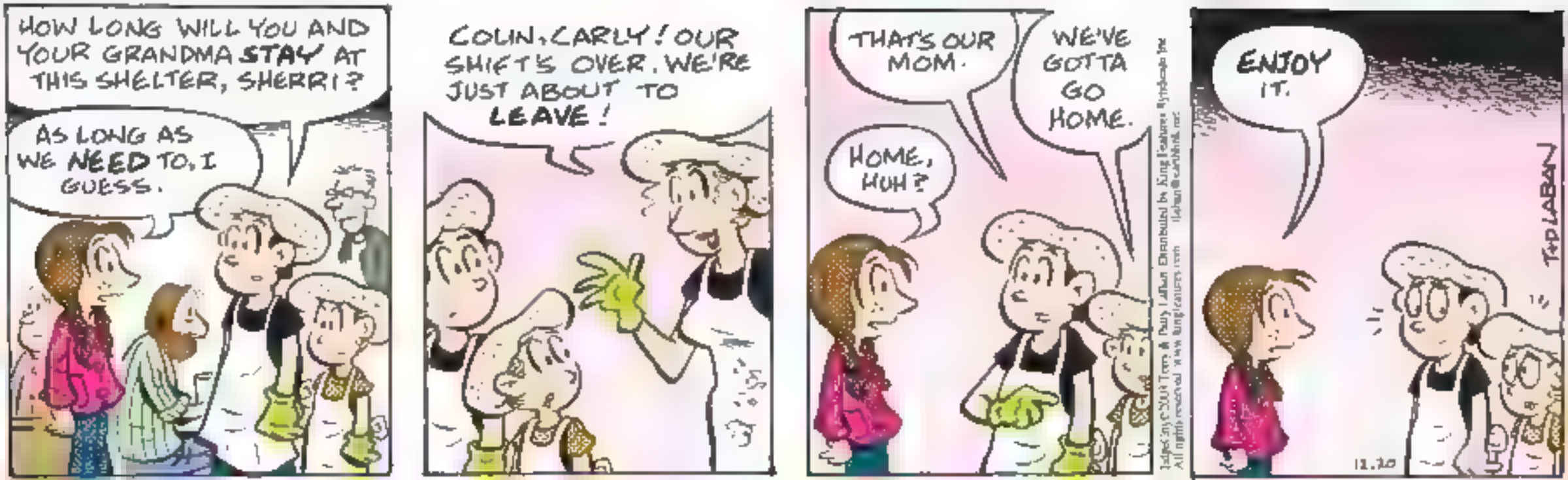
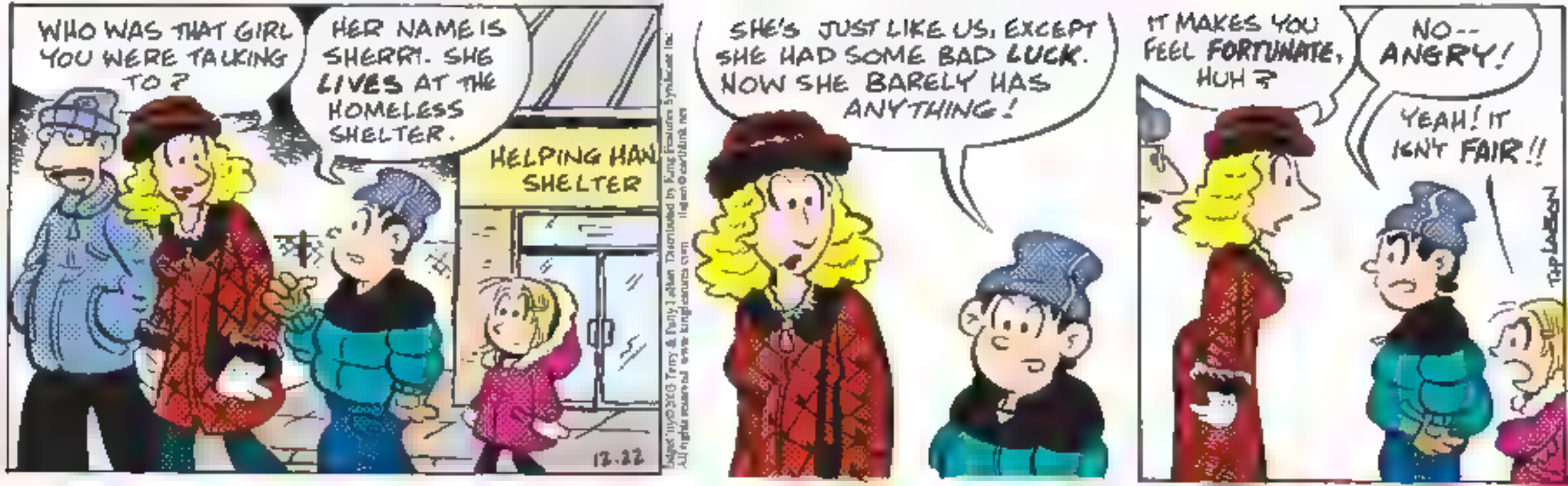



I'M SURPRISED HOW MUCH I'M ENJOYING VOLUNTEERING AT THE HOMELESS SHELTER, ABBY!
ME TOO, LEN! IT'S NICE WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP PEOPLE.
HOW ARE COLIN AND CARLY DOING?
IT TOOK SOME CONVINCING TO GET THEM HERE, BUT NOW THEY SEEM FINE!
I WISH THERE WERE MORE KIDS LIKE YOU TWO!
AWWW...


I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU GUYS VOLUNTEERING AT THE HOME-LESS SHELTER BEFORE.
YEAH-- THIS IS OUR FIRST TIME.
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE--OUR PARENTS MADE US.
YOU'RE LUCKY.
WHAT? THAT OUR MOM AND DAD FORCE US TO DO STUFF LIKE THIS?
NO--THAT YOU HAVE A MOM AND DAD!


I'M SHERRI.
I'M COLIN, AND THIS IS CARLY.
HOW DID YOU END UP IN THIS SHELTER?
I WAS LIVING WITH MY GRANDMA. SHE LOST HER JOB AND WE COULDN'T PAY OUR RENT ANYMORE.
WOW!
WHAT'S IT LIKE, LIVING HERE?
WELL, THE PEOPLE ARE NICE, AND WE HAVE OUR OWN ROOM. IT'S BETTER THAN WHERE WE LIVED BEFORE.
IT'S BETTER THAN YOUR HOUSE?!
NO -- OUR CAR.


HOW LONG WILL YOU AND YOUR GRANDMA STAY AT THIS SHELTER, SHERRI?
AS LONG AS WE NEED TO, I GUESS.
COLIN, CARLY! OUR SHIFT'S OVER. WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO LEAVE!
THAT'S OUR MOM.
WE'VE GOTTA GO HOME.
HOME, HUH?
ENJOY IT.
TED LABAN
12.20


WHO WAS THAT GIRL YOU WERE TALKING TO?
HER NAME IS SHERRI. SHE LIVES AT THE HOMELESS SHELTER.
HELPING HAN SHELTER
12.22
SHE'S JUST LIKE US, EXCEPT SHE HAD SOME BAD LUCK. NOW SHE BARELY HAS ANYTHING!
IT MAKES YOU FEEL FORTUNATE, HUH?
NO-- ANGRY!
YEAH! IT ISN'T FAIR!!
TOP LAUGH

YOU GUYS WERE REALLY AFFECTED BY OUR AFTERNOON AT THE HOMELESS SHELTER, WEREN'T YOU?

WE CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT THAT GIRL WE WERE TALKING TO.

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THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE WE CAN DO TO HELP HER!

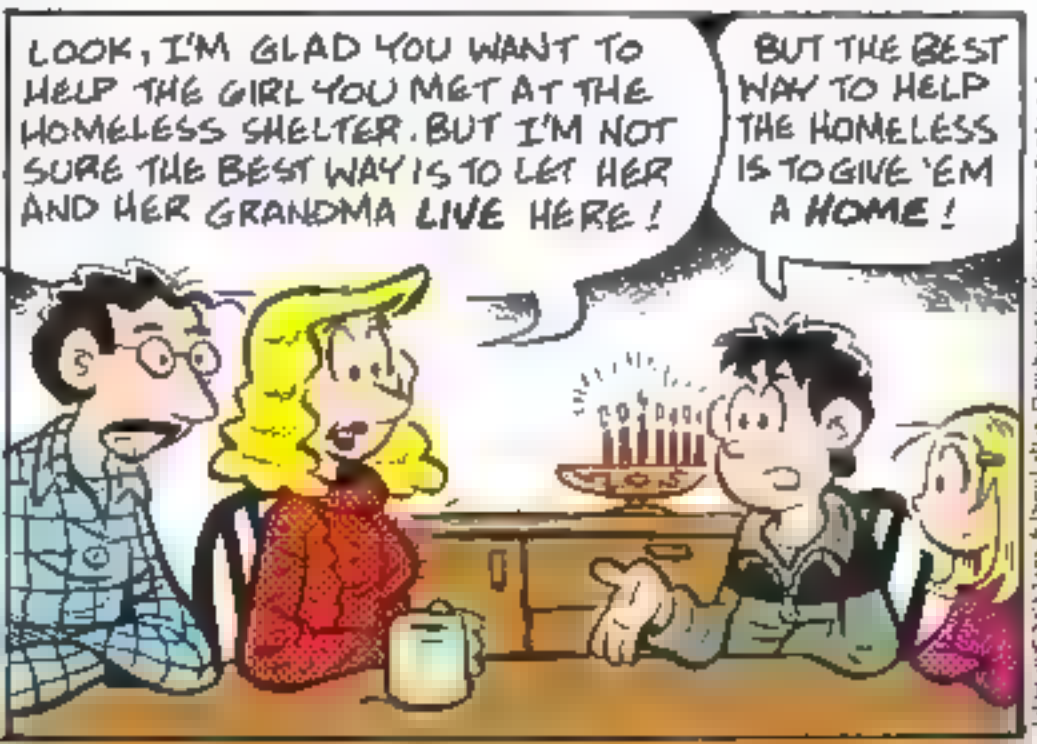
MAYBE THERE IS! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS?

12-23

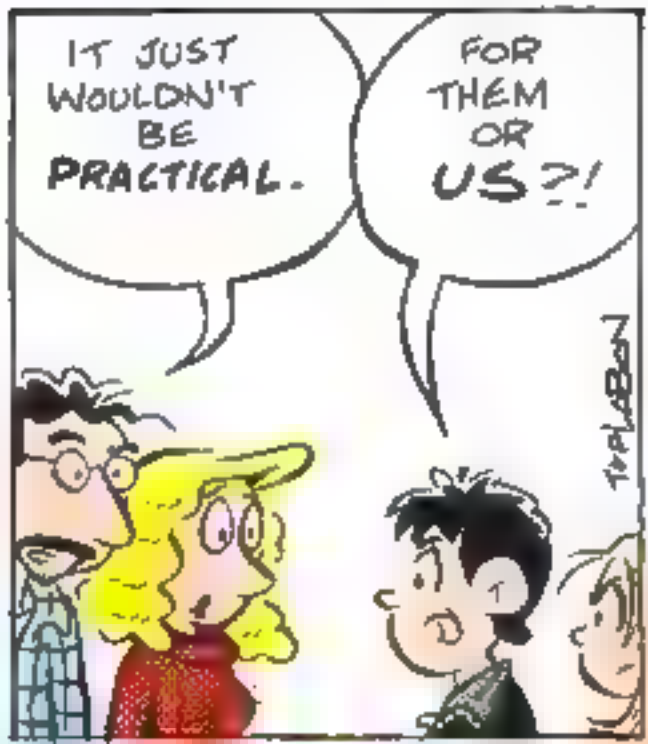
WHY DON'T WE LET HER AND HER GRANDMA LIVE WITH US?

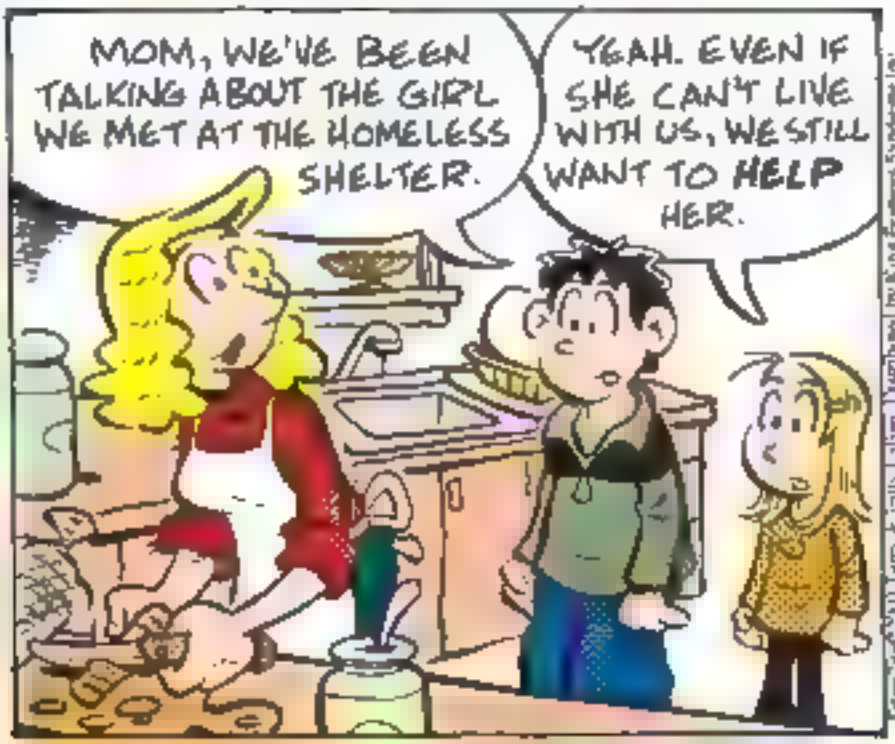
YEAH! WE HARDLY EVER USE THE GUEST ROOM!

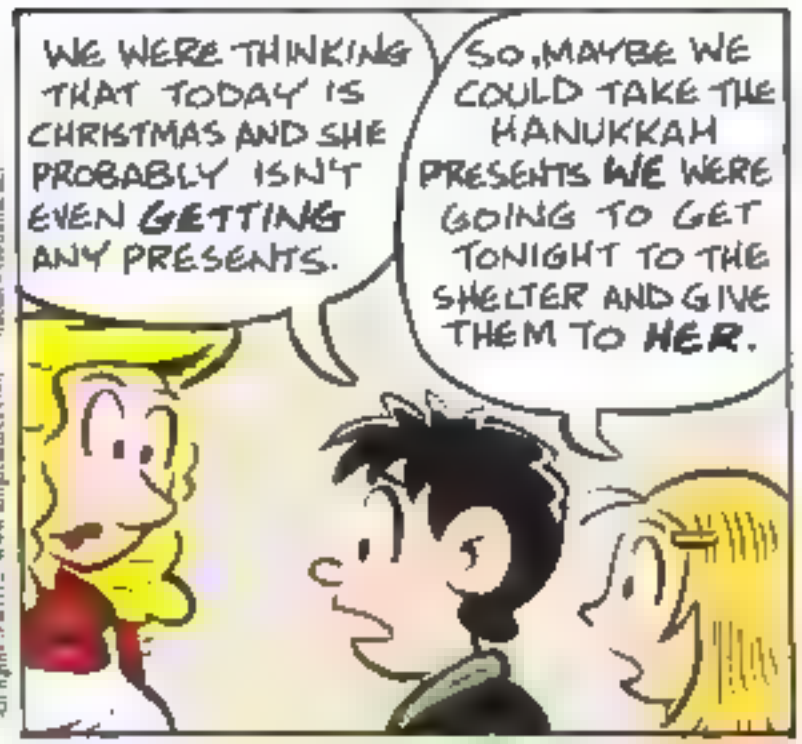
TYP LABAN

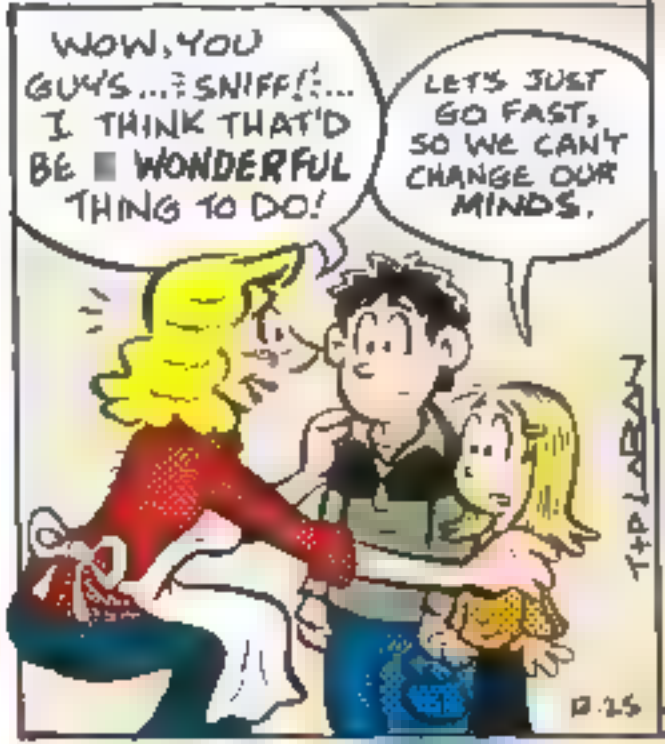

LOOK, I'M GLAD YOU WANT TO HELP THE GIRL YOU MET AT THE HOMELESS SHELTER. BUT I'M NOT SURE THE BEST WAY IS TO LET HER AND HER GRANDMA LIVE HERE!
BUT THE BEST WAY TO HELP THE HOMELESS IS TO GIVE 'EM A HOME!

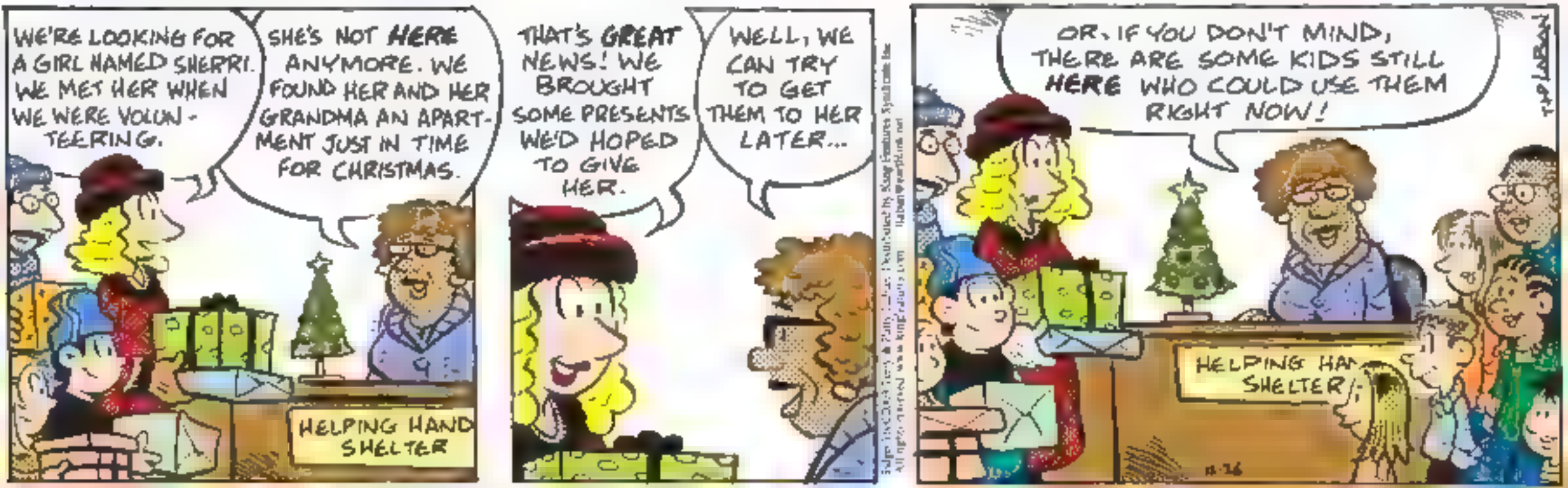
C'MON, COLIN! WE CAN'T LET TWO PEOPLE WHOM WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT COME STAY AT OUR HOUSE!
WHY NOT?
12-24

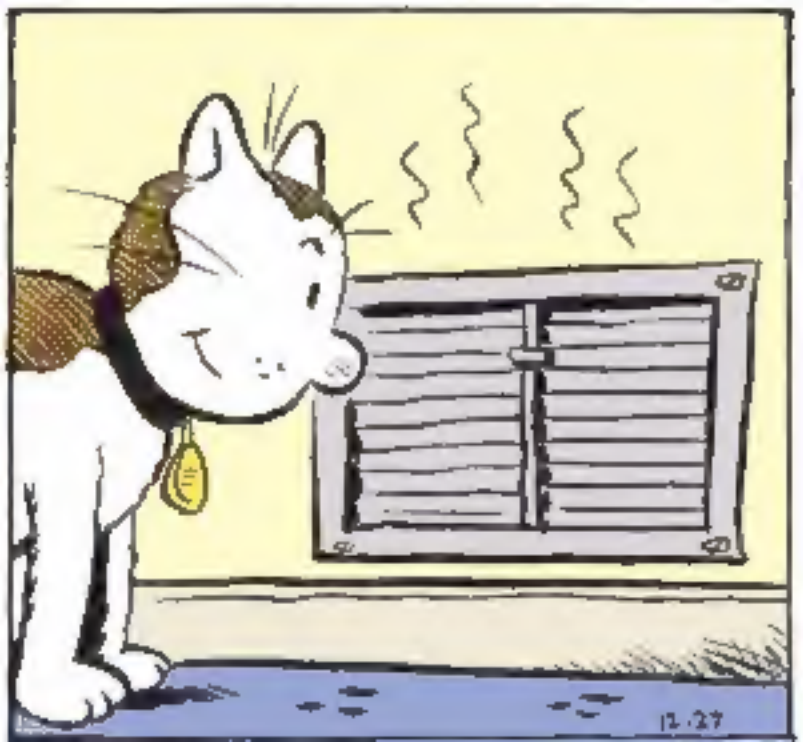

IT JUST WOULDN'T BE PRACTICAL.
FOR THEM OR US?!
TOPLABON

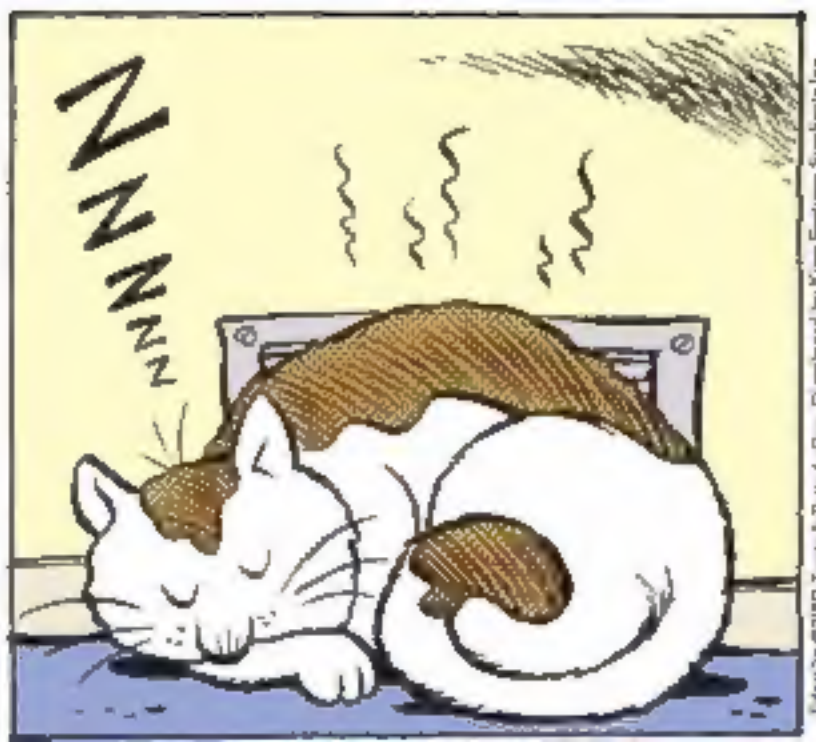

MOM, WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE GIRL WE MET AT THE HOMELESS SHELTER.
YEAH. EVEN IF SHE CAN'T LIVE WITH US, WE STILL WANT TO HELP HER.


WE WERE THINKING THAT TODAY IS CHRISTMAS AND SHE PROBABLY ISN'T EVEN GETTING ANY PRESENTS.
SO, MAYBE WE COULD TAKE THE HANUKKAH PRESENTS WE WERE GOING TO GET TONIGHT TO THE SHELTER AND GIVE THEM TO HER.


WOW, YOU GUYS...? SNIFF!... I THINK THAT'D BE A WONDERFUL THING TO DO!
LET'S JUST GO FAST, SO WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR MINDS.
D.25


WE'RE LOOKING FOR A GIRL NAMED SHERRI. WE MET HER WHEN WE WERE VOLUNTEERING.
SHE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE. WE FOUND HER AND HER GRANDMA AN APARTMENT JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS.
HELPING HAND SHELTER
THAT'S GREAT NEWS! WE BROUGHT SOME PRESENTS WE'D HOPED TO GIVE HER.
WELL, WE CAN TRY TO GET THEM TO HER LATER...
OR, IF YOU DON'T MIND, THERE ARE SOME KIDS STILL HERE WHO COULD USE THEM RIGHT NOW!
HELPING HAN SHELTER





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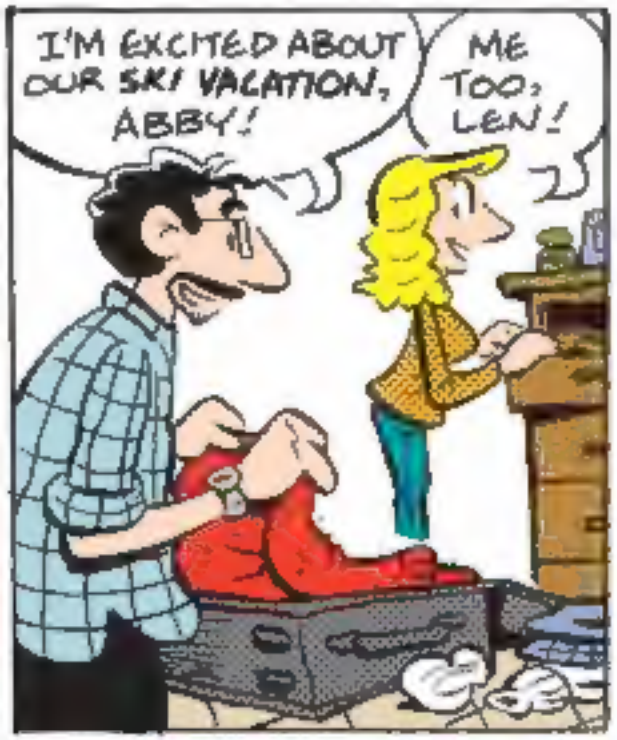

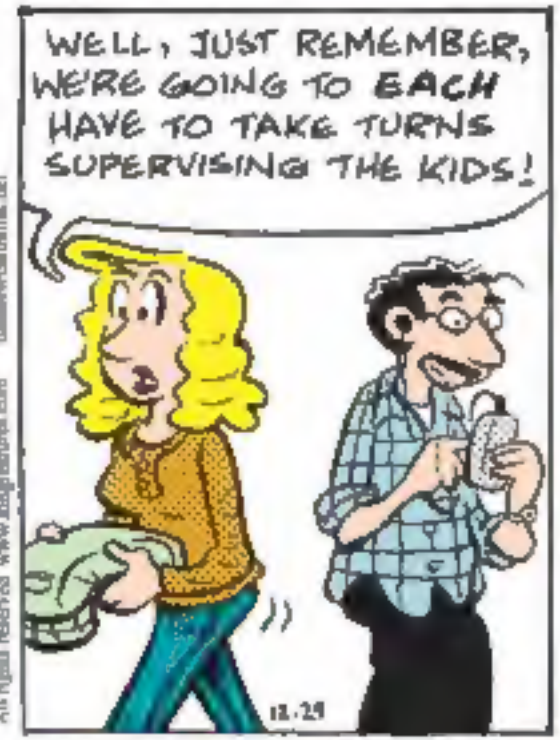

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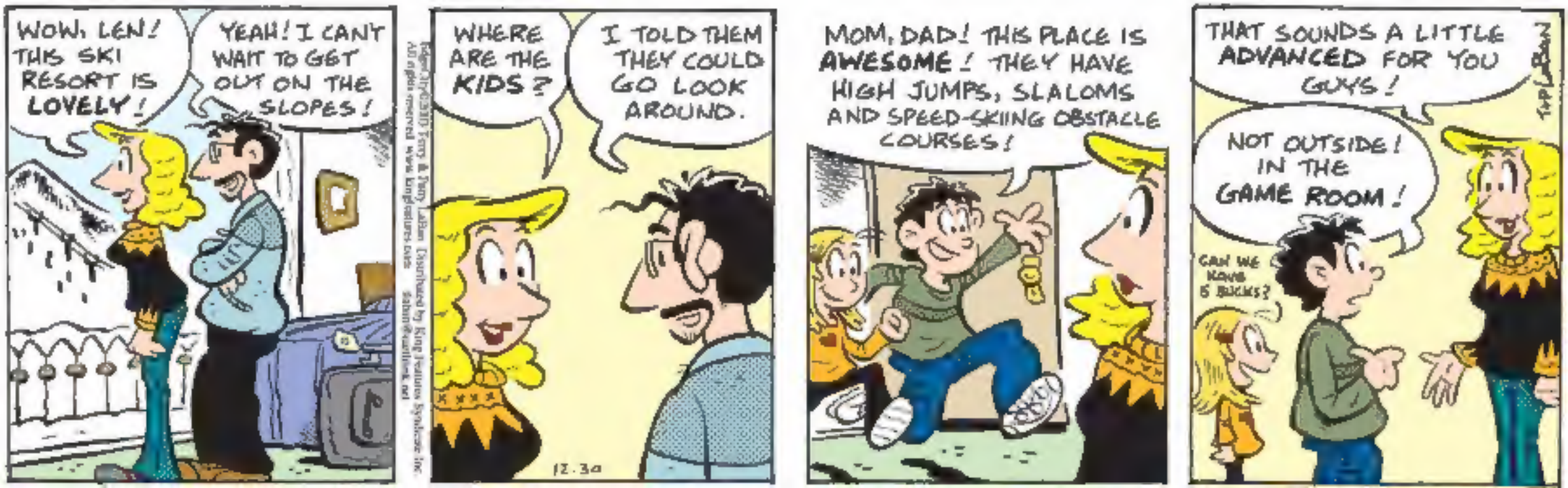

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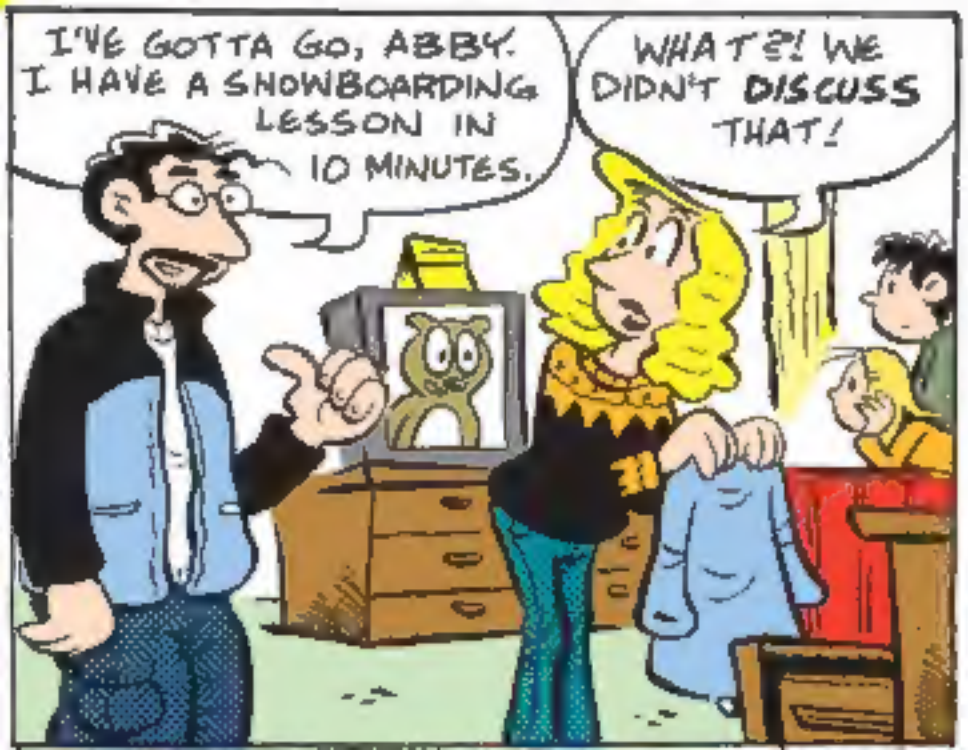

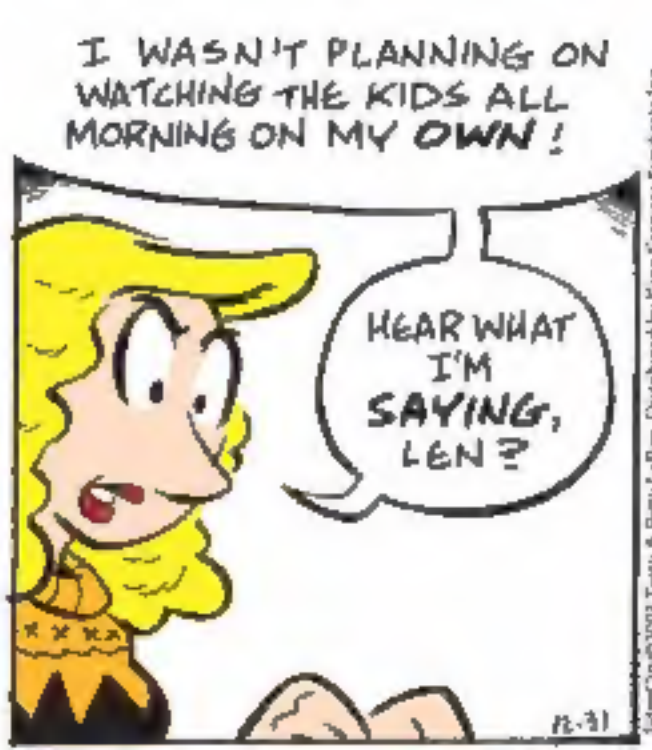
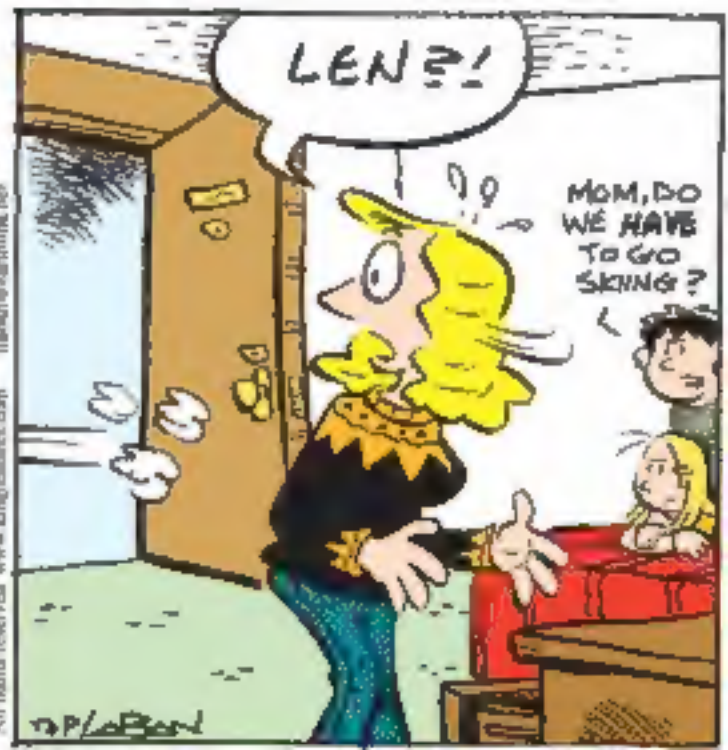
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